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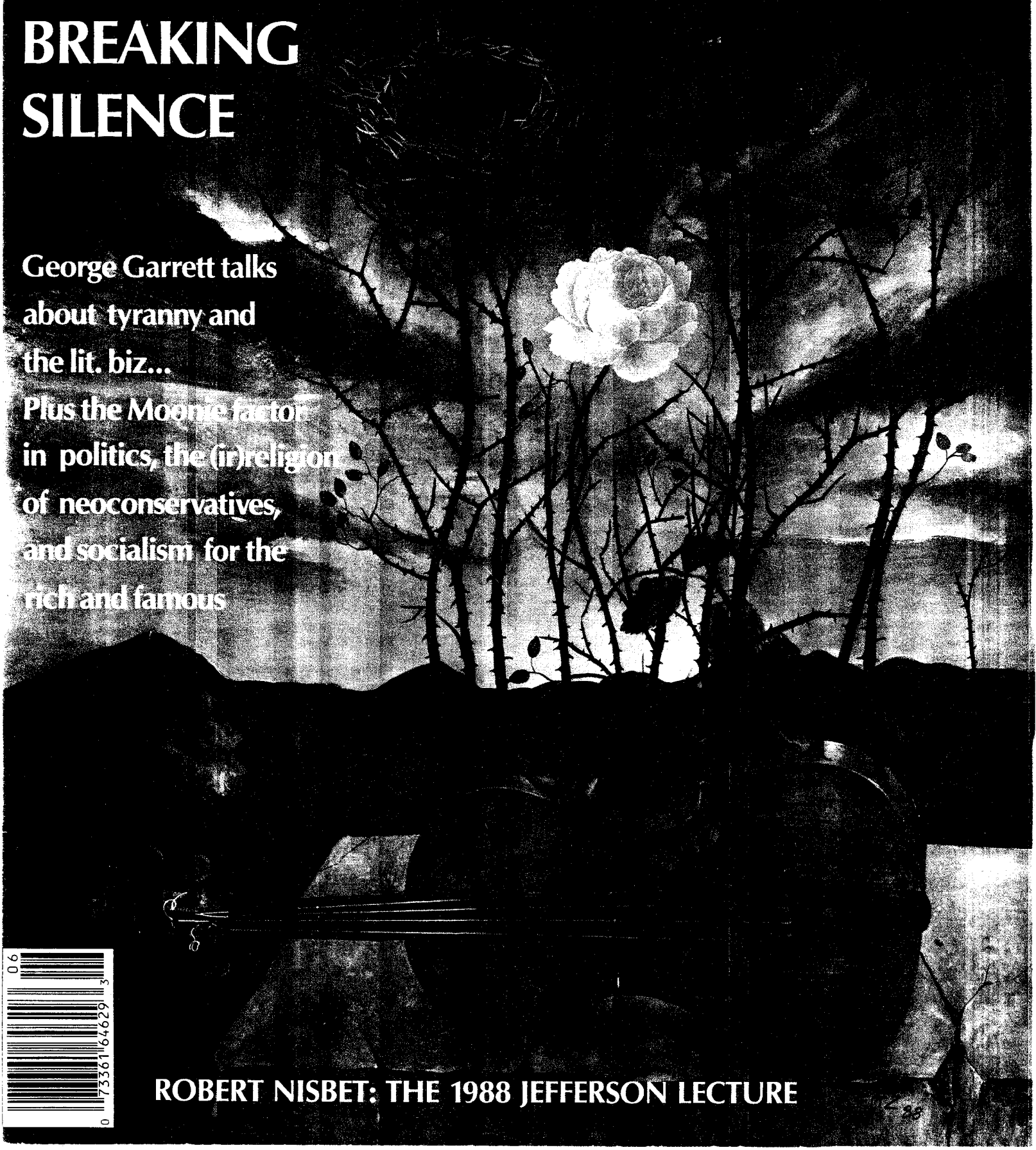
Chronicles

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

BREAKING SILENCE

George Garrett talks about tyranny and the lit. biz...
Plus the Moonie factor in politics, the (ir)religion of neoconservatives, and socialism for the rich and famous



ROBERT NISBET: THE 1988 JEFFERSON LECTURE

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Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE
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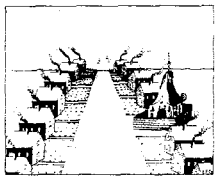

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On the Cover

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Lyndon LaRouche has been back in the news. Not only is the leader himself on trial for the political equivalent of credit card fraud, but in Illinois the two LaRouchie candidates who managed to torpedo Adlai Stevenson's gubernatorial campaign are both running again.

LaRouche is, so far as we can tell, an unlikable crank without principles or policies. Still, we wish the press would quit referring to him as "political extremist Lyndon LaRouche." In a country that has learned to accept politicians at their own valuation, why isn't LaRouche simply an idealist or a visionary? After all, Harold Washington is now widely described as a political reformer, Mario Cuomo is the tough and principled hope of the Democratic Party, Lowell Weicker and John Warner both claim to be Republicans in good standing, Jack Kemp says he is a conservative, Paul Simon claims to be a Missouri Synod Lutheran while voting consistently for abortion rights, and Jim Wright talks to Daniel Ortega on behalf of the people of the United States. Does LaRouche have that much less integrity than, say, the Rev. Jesse Jackson? Are his ideas that much more absurd than either the Democrats' or the Republicans' proposals for welfare reform or federally subsidized day care? Is the average member of Congress more principled in his financial affairs? After all, LaRouche just scams his followers' credit cards: he doesn't take "donations" and "speaker's fees" from companies hoping to influence legislation.

If we wonder why a crackpot like LaRouche can attract enough followers to annoy people in airports, it is because there is hardly a politician in the country who is willing even to talk about the concerns that most decent citizens have on their minds. (TF)

A Noah's Ark or a nation state? seems to be the question posed by the U.S. immigration policy. "Eviction[s] because of building charcoal fires indoors or slaughtering animals in the bathtub" are only some of the problems facing immigrant Hmong and Mein tribesmen in California. Others are "their medicinal use of opium, their 'capturing' of young brides . . . and other practices . . . resulting in legal problems that bring them confusion and shame."

At the Oakland mail inspection station, 249 pounds of opium sent from Laos and Thailand were discovered last year. In one case, Lieu Sinh Saechao, 35, is charged "with receiving a package containing over 10 pounds of opium from a relative." Some U.S. officials, however, are not overly sympathetic to such folkways. "This is a drug just like any other drug," contends Nancy L. Simpson, Assistant United States Attorney prosecuting the Saechao case.

But other officials, in other cases and departments, are more understanding. In New York City, Mr. Neftali Valencia, a Colombian who came to the U.S. after a sham marriage to an American in 1980, has been given a work permit. Though Valencia had no record of arrests, unpaid taxes, and parking tickets (as many of his illegal friends do), he *had* perjured himself and broken the law. "I didn't believe it until I saw that card," remarked a Mario Seville Sanchez, also an illegal immigrant, of Valencia's good fortune.

Close to a million illegals have taken advantage of the new immigration law. Others, like the Salvadorans (500,000 in the last several years), Nicaraguans (200,000), and other Hispanics, are still welcomed by a civil disobedience movement in the Southwest. The American Embassy in El Salvador predicts an "astronomical increase" in applications for visas in the 1990's as Salvadorans seek to join their amnestied relatives in the United States.

That, however, is of no concern to anyone but a growing number of Americans, increasingly uncomfortable in their own changing, multilingual, and multicultural country.

Billie Boggs used to be a bag lady—although she preferred the term "professional" street person. She slept in front of a vent outside a New York restaurant, ran out into traffic, screamed obscenities at passersby, and defecated in her clothes or on the sidewalk outside the Chemical Bank. She begged for money, then burned it or threw it away; she frequently assaulted her benefactors, especially old people and black men (she herself is black), chasing them with her umbrella and shouting racial epithets. Then, one day late last year, her career was interrupted by city workers (as part of Mayor Koch's program to get the homeless off the streets) who tried to have her committed and treated for mental illness. Therapy is the liberal solution to everything.

It was not long before the New York Civil Liberties Union was in court demanding that Billie (AKA Joyce Brown—she took her present name from TV talk show host Bill Boggs, whom she idolized) be left free to pursue her "alternative life-style." Judge Robert Lippman was mightily impressed with her, finding her possessed of "a sense of humor, pride, a fierce independence of spirit, [and] quick mental reflexes." Indeed, he suggested, we all would do well to take a page from her book; burning money, for instance, "may not satisfy a society increasingly oriented to profit making

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and bottom line pragmatism, but it is . . . consistent with the independence and pride she vehemently insists on asserting." The judge allowed that to those of us bound by "conventional standards" she "may seem deranged," but to the judge, "she may indeed be a professional in her life-style."

Released from the institution, where she had kept her skills sharp by continuing to chase people and holler at delivery men, Billie has since gone on to the academic life, delivering lectures at Harvard, Yale, Stanford, and other law schools. It is only a matter of time before she will be transmitting her professional knowledge to a new generation of students and faculty. The judge was right: Billie is too sane to be kept in an asylum; she belongs in the university. (MK)

Brats—now we call them hyperactive children—used to be disciplined; these days they are given drugs. Many psychologists and school officials insist that Ritalin is the best treatment for children suffering from hyperactivity, or the "attention deficit disorder." As a matter of routine, 15-year-old Rod Matthews of Canton, Massachusetts, was put on Ritalin as a means of controlling his unacceptable behavior.

Unfortunately, this chemical infusion of virtue did not help. Making his own "value-judgement" after watching *The Faces of Death* (a snuff video), young Matthews killed a classmate, just to see "what it was like." He even acquainted two other schoolmates with his plan. Two potential victims were rejected before 14-year-old Shaun Ouliette was picked, because "he wouldn't be missed."

Rod Matthews enticed Shaun Ouliette into the woods, promising him fireworks, and bludgeoned him to death with a baseball bat. Then, he took his two friends to see the corpse. Throughout his March 1988 trial, Rod Matthews sat impassively, as if the proceedings did not concern him. His mother also didn't betray much emotion—the passion was provided by the defense attorney, John Philip White, who argued that "[Rod Matthews'] pleas for help were ignored by teachers and friends."

White's calls for the medicalization of blame for Rod Matthews' crimes were disregarded by the jury. Despite over a century of scientific search for the bacillus of sin, the court sentenced Matthews to "life imprisonment" (usually 15 years in Massachusetts).

Ostensibly, Rod Matthews will be rehabilitated by stronger drugs than Ritalin. Given time, perhaps murder will also become a life-style, following sodomy, mendacity, alcoholism, and theft—one-time crimes and vices that became diseases in our age. Rod's parents can safely transfer their unfulfilled obligations to tax-paid professionals, after having been let down by their privately contracted vicars in child-rearing.

The controversy over the use of drugs to manage children with the "attention deficit disorder" is not new. In the 1970's, some parents filed lawsuits charging school officials with "dumping unruly, bored students on local clinicians who routinely prescribed amphetamine maintenance as a way out." A 1987 survey by the Georgia State Composite Board of Medical Examiners showed that 45 percent of the state's unusually high use of Ritalin was occurring in the "affluent suburbs north of Atlanta."

"Among these people there is an intense desire to have their child excel," said Andy Wary, the executive director of the board. But a group of parents from these same neighborhoods complained to a state lawmaker that "teachers were pressuring them to put their children on Ritalin."

As one school leader of a parent group expressed it, "Schools want to medicate, not educate."

At his trial, Charles Manson pointed out to the court that he was a product of the state in whose institutions he had grown up. Before his 30th birthday, Rod Matthews will be out of jail, unless some unreconstructed inmate does him in. (For all their horror, prisons still provide a cause-and-effect environment.) What he will have learned "inside" may only be surmised, given, so far, his exceptional education in Massachusetts. (MS)

Cry Freedom, the Richard Attenborough film, is yet another attempt to rewrite recent history using a prism of liberal shibboleths and the civil rights experience in the United States from which to make judgments. The film is based on the so-called friendship between Bantu leader Steve Biko, the black consciousness proponent, and Donald Woods, a white liberal newspaper reporter, and their united effort to undermine the hateful apartheid system. Yet the friendship between Biko and Woods—if one relies on Biko's written claims—was a contrivance and their views of dismantling apartheid very different.

According to intimates, Biko didn't know Woods very well at all. He carefully cultivated his friendships among those he could trust in the South African Students' Organization and Black Peoples Convention. Yet Attenborough relied on the self-serving books Donald Woods wrote as if they are realistic depictions of the Biko-Woods friendship.

Peter Cyril Jones, the last black man to see Biko alive, contends that whatever friendship existed between these men was of a "mutually abusive nature." Biko gained access to the pages of Woods's newspaper, and Woods gained access to a black leader, which enhanced his standing among liberal friends. Moreover, this relationship allowed Woods some acquaintance with the black consciousness movement in which Biko was a major figure.

Yet Biko was an unlikely soul mate of Woods, notwithstanding Attenborough's claim to the contrary. In his essay "Black Souls in White Skins" Biko unintentionally provides the most damaging indictment of the film. He claims that the real oppressors of blacks are white liberals who organize for blacks, think for blacks, and act for blacks. In South Africa, he argued, these people, who, most assuredly, would include Donald Woods, have attempted to entrench a white trusteeship over blacks. It is absurd to believe, Biko maintains, that white-black integration could solve South Africa's problems. Attenborough's attempt at glorifying integration in the name of a symbiotic black-white relationship is a disservice to truth and to the principles Biko espoused.

Biko systematically disapproved of any Bantu followers who allowed themselves to be drawn into relationships with white liberals. He indicated in almost all his public utterances the damage to blacks that emerges from

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integration. Blacks, Biko noted, have been made to feel inferior in South Africa for so long that for them the slightest gesture of humane treatment is misinterpreted. Such treatment allows some blacks to consider themselves superior to their fellowmen who do not receive similar gestures from whites. In this instance is to be found the degradation of blacks and the paternalism of white liberals.

These reflections, of course, do not suggest that Biko was only mildly critical of the government in South Africa, which constructed the legal edifice of apartheid, reserving his animus for white liberals. He fought vigorously against apartheid, sometimes aimlessly and sometimes foolishly, but he realized that white liberals were more culpable of racial stereotyping than Afrikaner leaders. He also realized that those whites who represented themselves as friends to black leaders couldn't bring about a fundamental alteration of the political system.

Whether Biko was right remains to be seen. But on one matter there isn't any dispute among black colleagues who knew him well: the Attenborough film, *Cry Freedom*, is a complete distortion of the South African political situation. The film quite obviously seeks to restructure the meaning of Biko's work to justify a particular view—and I might add naive view—of South Africa's future.

This isn't the first time Sir Richard Attenborough has used his political beliefs as the lens for his films. Certainly he has every right to do so. He is also consistently honored for his personal interpretation of history. He is the recipient of the Jean Renoir Humanitarian Award, had a day named for him in Los Angeles, and *Cry Freedom* has been nominated for a Golden Globe Award. But it is important to appreciate that this man who claims to believe deeply in freedom would allow officials of the African National Congress to review and censor this film before it was released. One might justifiably ask why the ANC was given this privilege and why, with recommendations duly accepted, this organization gave its stamp of approval for its distribution. One might also ask why a film that purports to be a slice of history routinely ignores actual conditions in South Africa in order to paint a portrait that is compatible with the director's impressions and political goals.

—*Herbert London*

The Closing of the American Mind was last year's liberal cliché of the year. This year, the left's answer may well be I.F. Stone's *The Trial of Socrates*. Billed as an exercise in investigative reporting, Stone's book does to Athens what *I.F. Stone's Weekly* used to do to the United States. Stone's "original" thesis is that Socrates' antidemocratic sentiments got him in trouble, but—he argues—the Athenians were still not justified in silencing the gadfly. (One wonders what the Germans should have done with Hitler.)

Stone seems to be everywhere these days talking about Socrates—on National Public Radio, in the *New York Review of Books*, in *Harper's*. The only trouble is, he simply does not know anything about the subject—not Greek, not ancient history, not philosophy—nothing (or, as they say in a language Stone cannot read, *ouden*). What's worse, his brilliant original thesis was a commonplace in the late 18th century and was made famous by Hegel. Even Stone might have read Hegel. It is a permanent black mark against Little, Brown to have published this thing—you can't call it a book—and what's worse, nobody there has enough scruples (or is it education?) even to be ashamed of what they've done.

It is not worth the space it would take to detail all of Stone's howlers, but this has not silenced the chorus of applause. Writing in *The Atlantic*, Bernard Knox praises Stone's "eye for significant detail and the latent connection." Coming from the usual *Atlantic* crowd, such a review would be understandable, but—politics aside—Bernard Knox has had a distinguished academic career and has done as much as anyone in the U.S. to further the advancement of classics. That he should soil his hands by petting the likes of Stone is simply a mystery. Equally hard to understand is Glen Bowersock's velvet-glove treatment in *The New Republic*: a cautious correction or two interrupt the paean. Only Sidney Hook—not a classicist at all—has actually told the truth in his *Wall Street Journal* review. What goes on?

One likes to think that for the important things, politics doesn't matter. There are a great many leftist writers that one can admire—Christopher Lasch, for example; liberals are something else. Real honest-to-goodness liberal scholars apparently know that they have to give up all their standards if they wish to write regularly for *The New Republic*. (TF)

BOOKS IN BRIEF

***The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*, edited by Richard G. Hovannisian, New Brunswick: Transaction Books; 330 pages; $14.95.** "Who still talks today of the extermination of the Armenians?" said Hitler before the genocide of the Jews. The Turks certainly do not. A collection of papers delivered at the International Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide in Tel Aviv in 1982, this book serves as a reminder that unrecognized truth festers.

***The Last Empire*, edited by Robert Conquest, Stanford: The Hoover Institution Press; 406 pages; $27.95.** A country without ethnic problems, the USSR continues to expand, to the greater glory of the Great Russian People.

***Tito, Mihailovic and the Allies* by Walter R. Roberts, Durham: Duke University Press; 406 pages; $15.95.** A reprint of a classic work on wartime Yugoslavia, this book cannot escape the spiritual legacy of George F. Kennan and other U.S. State Department experts.

***Bloodsong, and Other Stories of South Africa* by Ernst Havemann, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company; 134 pages; $13.95.** A volume of excellent short stories about South Africa, by a gifted writer.

***Open Borders, Nonalignment, and the Political Evolution of Yugoslavia* by William Zimmerman, Princeton: Princeton University Press; 158 pages; $22.00.** This book could have been written in Belgrade, for all its meticulous attention to a system of formalized deception that Yugoslav "self-management" and "nonalignment" have become.

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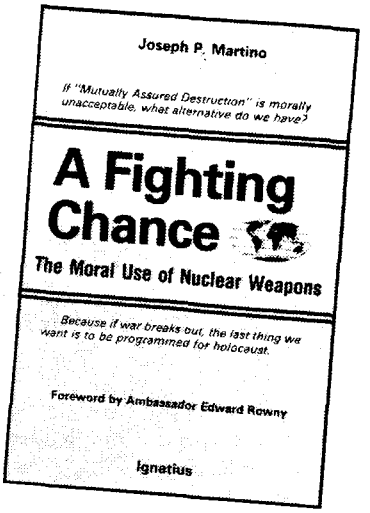
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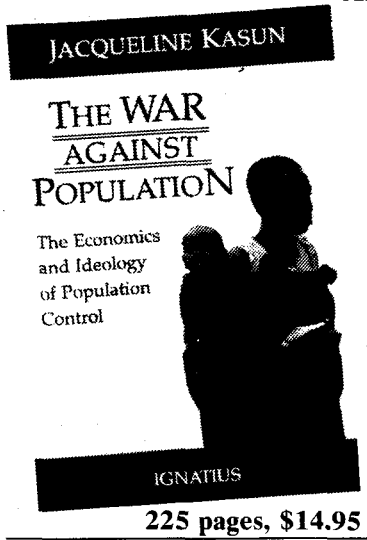

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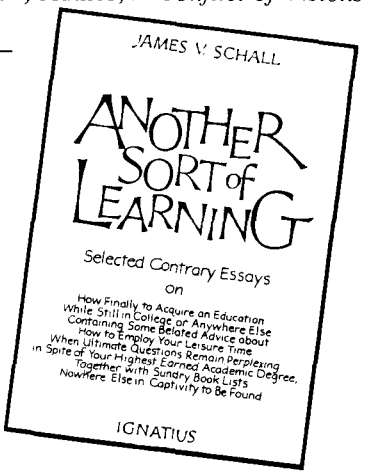
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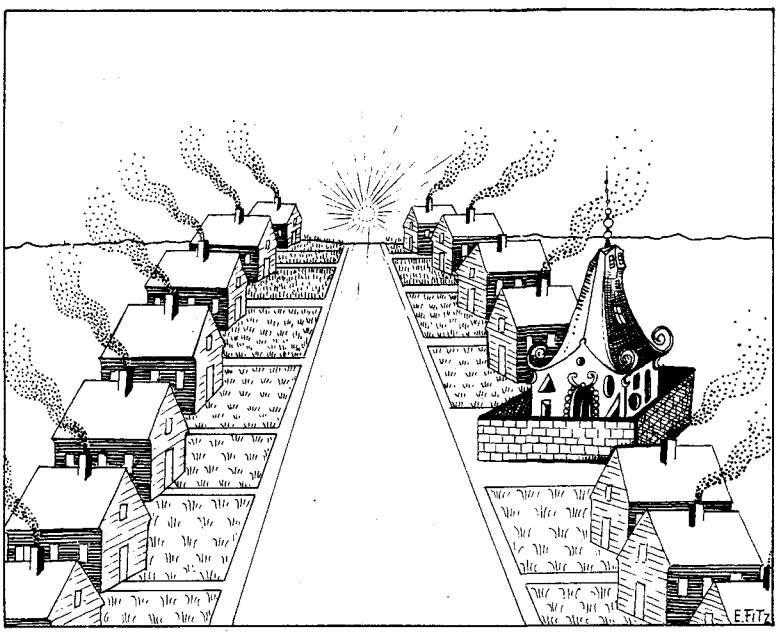
FREEDOM OF OPINION AND DEMOCRACY *by Thomas Fleming*

"I know of no country in which there is so little independence of mind and real freedom of discussion as in America. In America, the majority raises formidable barriers around the liberty of opinion: within these barriers, an author may write what he pleases; but woe to him if he goes beyond them. Not that he is in danger of an auto-da-fé, *but he is exposed to continued obloquy and persecution. His political career is closed forever, since he has offended the only authority which is able to open it. Every sort of compensation, even that of celebrity, is refused to him. . . . Fetters and headsmen were the coarse instruments which tyranny formerly employed; but the civilization of our age has perfected despotism itself, though it seemed to have nothing to learn. Monarchs had, so to speak, materialized oppression: the democratic republics of the present day have rendered it as entirely an affair of the mind, as the will which it is intended to coerce. . . . The master no longer says, 'You shall think as I do, or you shall die'; but he says, 'You are free to think differently from me, and to retain your life, your property, and all that you possess; but you are henceforth a stranger among your people. You may retain your civil rights, but they will be useless to you, for you will never be chosen by your fellow-citizens, if you solicit their votes; and they will affect to scorn you, if you ask for their esteem; you will remain among men, but you will be deprived of the rights of mankind. Your fellow-creatures will shun you like an impure being; and even those who believe in your innocence will abandon you, lest they should be shunned in their turn. Go in peace! I have given you your life, but it is an existence worse than death.'*

"The ruling power in the United States is not to be made game of. The smallest reproach irritates its sensibility, and the slightest joke which has any foundation in truth renders it indignant; from the forms of its language up to the solid virtues of its character, everything must be made the subject of encomium. No writer, whatever be his eminence, can escape this tribute of adulation to his fellow-citizens. The majority lives in the perpetual utterance of self-applause; and there are certain truths which the Americans can only learn from strangers or from experience.

"If America has not as yet had any great writers, the reason is given in these facts; there can be no literary genius without freedom of opinion, and freedom of opinion does not exist in America."

—Alexis de Tocqueville
Democracy in America



Like so many of Tocqueville's observations, his comment on freedom of opinion in America seems more a prophecy than a description. In the century and a half since the publication of *Democracy in America*, we have given up the prudery, on which Tocqueville remarked, along with the patriotic self-applause he found so amusing. The spectrum of political opinion has also shifted radically—with shades of red predominating—but the intolerance of dissent may be greater in the 1980's than it was in the 1830's.

We have a free press, it is true, and almost any variety of opinion can be published, but an advocate of aristocracy will still find himself a stranger in his own land. The list of taboo subjects is extensive, and it is perilous even to mention them: racial differences in physical and intellectual aptitude, the moral status of slavery and apartheid, the demerits of female suffrage, the cost—financial as well as political—of our commitment to Israel (although the last is increasingly fashionable on the pro-Soviet left). On campus and in

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fashionable circles the list extends to the entire feminist agenda, homosexual rights, and anything connected with the Third World. It is not simply that some positions are accepted as right or denounced as wrong, but that a man who plays devil's advocate by criticizing Dr. King or attacking women's rights is read out of the human race, or at least that portion of it that includes all right-thinking Americans.

The real national pastime is not baseball but a more sophisticated game, which might be called "finding the center" or "where do you stand?" It is played by politicians, journalists, clergymen, and next-door neighbors, by anyone who is eager to locate his own position at the center by shunting someone else to the periphery and beyond the acceptable bounds of deviation. In religious circles the game is played with predictable zeal. Mainstream denominations are OK but not the evangelicals; or, the evangelicals are OK but not the television evangelists; or, even the TV preachers are OK but not the Chalcedonian Calvinists (too apocalyptic) or the Wisconsin Synod Lutherans (too rigid).

Church is not the only place where orthodoxy is imposed. If I cut my grass twice a week in July, this means I will accept a man who cuts his grass only once a week, but anyone who lets it grow for two weeks is beyond the pale. He is causing my property value to go down. He is attracting vermin. He is obviously not a good neighbor and probably not a good American.

While this village mentality is a universal phenomenon and unquestionably a very useful form of social regulation, its influence on serious discourse is less obviously beneficial. Village life is democratic in the best sense of that abused word, because it discourages those distinctions which disrupt the social order. A man of ability who wants to become a small-town mayor had better learn to hide his light under a bushel, because eloquence or ambition are prima facie evidence of social deviance. But the life of the mind is by nature antidemocratic. Any genuine poet or philosopher must some day be willing to swim against the stream, to think his own thoughts, to speak his own words. His motto must be, "publish and be damned"—although not in the sense that Wellington intended.

The fate of an honest writer in America is something like the fate of a Russian dissident. We don't jail or beat up those who hold extreme views; we simply refuse to publish their books or to give them tenure at a decent university. We don't send them to Siberia, but we do send them to Coventry. We congratulate ourselves upon the free circulation of ideas, while at the same time set up a system of education whose major function is to turn out the mass-produced mentalities that pay their taxes and laugh at David Letterman. It is as efficient a system of statist indoctrination as can be devised, and it works so well that few of us ever complain. Our shoulders have bent themselves to fit the yoke. John Dewey, not Lenin, was the greatest revolutionary of this century, and it is no accident that Dewey came to resent the Soviet system as a rival. He was neither the first nor the last totalitarian intellectual to take refuge in anti-Communism.

If we are still an essentially free country, it is because a sizable part of the population has built up a degree of immunity against the educational propaganda to which they have been overexposed, in regular doses of civics classes and newspaper editorials. Since education has come to be little more than indoctrination, the least-educated enjoy the most freedom of opinion. In the great affairs of state, uneducated Americans are easy enough to manipulate. Who knows the rights and wrongs of Central America policy or has sufficient technical background to judge the merits of SDI? On these faraway subjects, most of us simply don't care enough to disagree with Dan Rather, but on stories that hit close to home, we refuse to be bullied. It did not matter that virtually every editorialist in the country told us that Bernhard Goetz was a homicidal psychopath. Anyone who had ever spent five minutes in New York or Detroit or St. Louis knew better.

In a reasonably healthy community, the people may understand very little of constitutional mechanics or international affairs. However, they are often able to size up their local leaders. Outside the major cities American voters often have a fair idea of the strengths and weaknesses of mayors, aldermen, and local legislators who may live down the block or have married a cousin. In this light, it would make more sense for congressmen and Presidents to be elected by locally chosen electors—the very system established by the authors of the Constitution. Direct democracy, as our ancestors in New England town meetings and in the parishes of the South were well aware, works best when the participants have a face-to-face acquaintance. No kind of democracy will ever work, so long as the people's representatives spend most of their time a thousand miles away from their relatives and neighbors. The current system, for all the boast of democracy, is a test of comparative wealth and an exercise in systematic bribery.

But any discussion of indirect election will bring out the lynch mob of global democrats, because in a "democracy" the one subject that may not be discussed honestly is democracy itself. This has not always been the case. Few of the Founding Fathers of this republic viewed democracy with anything but alarm, and even 25 years ago, European rightists and their American disciples subjected democracy to a withering attack from their redoubt at *National Review*. To this day, they continue to trace all our woes to the administrations of Jefferson and Jackson.

What the European right refuses to recognize is the conservative strain in the Jeffersonian tradition. Neither Jefferson nor Jackson were downright levelers, and all that most Americans mean, when they boast of democracy, is that they have control over their own destinies. No one can ask to see their papers (at least, not yet), and no one can force them to revere a degenerate who happens to be rich or to bear a noble name. We are spared the indignity of "His Grace, the Duke of Xanadu," or "My Lord Kennedy."

Democracy in this sense has little to do with the principle of one man/one vote, direct election, or with the millennia of speeches pronounced on the subject of equal rights. Democracy in the narrow, legalistic sense of a political system is the sworn enemy of the American democracy Tocqueville described and grudgingly admired. The democratic-populist spirit cannot long coexist with procedural democracy, because the latter makes war upon all natural institutions. In the name of procedural democracy, families are torn apart by feminist legislation and degrad-

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ed by homosexual propaganda; communities are disrupted by forced busing; and the exercise of religion is driven out of public life as the nation's majority of believing Christians are compelled by law to be ashamed of their Savior's name.

The one thing American conservatives used to have clear in their heads was the danger inherent in ideological democracy, which they traced—quite correctly—to the French, not the American Revolution. But now, like Tennessee Pentacostalists, they are beginning to measure the strength of their convictions by the ability to pick up and handle this dangerous serpent. They will go to nearly any lengths to show their willingness to reconcile democratic theory with conservative principle. What is more alarming, some conservative writers are beginning to insist that democracy—in the sense of equal rights—is the *summum bonum*, and they denounce anyone who declines to worship at this shrine as a gentile, one of the "lesser breeds without the law."

There is hardly a political animal—liberal or conservative—who is not ready to endorse the American Federation of Teachers' recent declaration that democracy is "the worthiest form of governance ever conceived," without questioning what union boss Albert Shanker and his colleagues mean by such a statement. Much that is in the "Education for Democracy" is welcome. The signers—such luminaries as retired tennis star Arthur Ashe, former President Jimmy Carter, and the leader of the once-powerful AFL-CIO, Lane Kirkland—call for a beefed-up history curriculum and greater attention to "the whole sweep of Western civilization." But what they mean by history or civilization is a puzzle. Most of their examples are drawn from the past 40 years of American politics, and for all the details they provide, the democrats might be describing the world of *Dune*.

It is the mark of the true-believing democrat never to define his terms. Either you are with him or you are "an extremist" (on the right or left). The nearest "Education for Democracy" comes to explicitness is a list of democratic values: "Devotion to human dignity and freedom, to equal rights, to social and economic justice, to the rule of law, to civility and truth, to tolerance of diversity, to mutual assistance, to personal and civic responsibility, to self-restraint and self-respect" . . . but the task of filling up the blanks I'd rather leave to you.

Who doesn't profess respect for the rule of law or truth or tolerance? But what do they mean by social and economic justice? Ordinarily, in the Soviet empire, Nicaragua, or Scandinavia, it means nothing less than redistribution of wealth through taxation and special policies designed to help the unproductive at the expense of the productive. It means in the U.S. all the cozy legal advantages given to the AFL-CIO, which have enabled union bosses to undermine industrial productivity. It means, in short, the sort of soft-core Trotskyism that has been the mainstay of Northeastern intellectualism for so many years. "Social justice," commented Irving Babbitt, "means, in practice, class justice, class justice means class war and class war, if we are to go by all the experience of the past and present, means hell."

If Mr. Shanker were only putting it forward as his private opinion that democracy is the greatest little form of government in the world, one could pardon his patriotic zeal and join him in his pledge of allegiance. But he seems to expect everyone, especially teachers, to endorse it. By implication, any teacher (whether leftist or conservative) whose education is good enough to make him immune to the propaganda of John Dewey and Walter Lippmann should not be teaching in an American public school. The most obvious next step will be the regulation of private schools through some tuition tax credit scheme and, finally, the empowerment of the Secretary of Education as the curriculum commissar of the United States. Then we shall all be such good little democrats, i.e., docile subjects of the total state, that no one will have to worry about freedom of expression ever again.

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THE PRESENT AGE AND THE STATE OF COMMUNITY *by Robert Nisbet*

The Present Age begins with the First World War, the Great War as it is deservedly still known. No war ever began more jubilantly, among all classes and generations, the last including the young generation that had to fight it. It is said that when Viscount Grey, British Foreign Minister, uttered his epitaph of the war on the evening of August 3, 1914—"The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime"—he could scarcely be heard by those sitting in his office because of the loud cheers on the street outside the building. From the beginning it was a cheering and also singing war; only after a year of devastating trench warfare did the cheers begin to subside.

In Europe the war ended, in November 1918, in somber hue. Twelve million European soldiers had been killed, 25 million wounded, and vast areas, along with their churches, halls, and houses, devastated. Every conceivable horror of war was perpetrated by both sides. "When it was all over," wrote Churchill just after the war, "Torture and Cannibalism were the only two expedients that the civilized, scientific Christian States had been able to deny themselves, and they were of doubtful utility."

An unknown German named Oswald Spengler had spent the war in his hometown writing *The Decline of the West*. Freshly published copies festooned bookstore windows for the edification of the defeated German soldiers straggling home. It was by no means the only grim epitaph of the Great War. Such works as *The Magic Mountain*, *Death in Venice*, *Desert of Love*, *Under Fire*, *The Waste Land*, *Goodbye to All That*, and *Brave New World* attested to the impact of what had been fundamentally a civil war, one strongly tinctured by religious moralism that made it a war of total Good against total Evil for the duration. Possibly no war in history has ever had more striking consequences: the Seventy-Four Years War, perhaps yet to be the West's second Hundred Years War; the novel and persistent totalitarian state; permanent, state-managed terror against the innocent; and the Third World, that part of it, at least, composed of the *disjecta membra* of the old European empires.

When we turn to America, as I now do for the rest of the lecture, the scene changes vastly. No nation ever had a better war than America did with the Great War. We were combatant for a little over a year. Not a shell or bomb fell on American soil. We prospered economically, our losses in battle were small. But that notwithstanding the American experience was at once shocking and joyful. For about two years it was as though some powerful demigod had amused himself turning America upside down in its government.

Prior to 1917 we were the most decentralized, dispersed, regionalized, and localized government to be found among the great nations of Western society. What with those features of our government plus the rigorous separation of powers in the Constitution and the vast number of rights and powers left to the component states, it is no wonder that European scholars and statesmen—Lord Bryce, who loved America, among them—denied that the United States had a true sovereign or, as Bryce put it, "a Theory of the State."

Within weeks of declaration of war on Germany in early April 1917, all this was being changed, transformed. Overnight America became a highly centralized, collectivized war state, virtually a total state. In an extraordinary series of acts, Congress turned the government, and also economy and social order of the United States, over to President Wilson and his war government. The railroads, telegraph, mines, munition factories, shipping lines were all immediately nationalized. A War Industries Board was given total power over the production areas of the economy. A War Labor Policies Board was established, a Food Administration.

That was only the beginning. Believing that the hearts and minds of the people were vital to his great war design, Wilson, working through his personally chosen aide, George Creel, set up a national corps of Four-Minute Men, 75,000 strong before the war ended. Each was empowered to enter any public meeting, including church services, without invitation, and to speak for about four minutes on the purposes of the American war against the German.

This is a slightly adapted version of the Jefferson Lecture for 1988, which was delivered under the auspices of the National Endowment for the Humanities in Washington, DC, on the evening of May 13th. Parts will appear in The Present Age *(Harper & Row, 1988).*

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Beyond this, more than a million so-called Neighborhood Watchers were recruited to serve without pay, or even official identification in most cases, to serve quite literally as spies or monitors upon their own neighborhoods; this, of course, to pick up any possibly disloyal remarks from the neighbors. As Samuel Morrison writes, it "was a wonderful opportunity to bring patriotism to the aid of neighborhood feuds and personal grudges."

In 1917, at Wilson's request, Congress passed the Espionage Act which banned certain types of speech in the interest of military recruitment under the draft. The following year, also at Wilson's request, Congress passed the Espionage Act under which Victor Berger, the first socialist ever elected to Congress, and the notable labor leader Eugene Debs were sent for long sentences to federal prisons for publicly questioning American entrance into the war. The Palmer Raids in 1919, raids without warrant by the Attorney General, were only extensions of invasions of offices and homes which had begun in late 1917. Prior censorship of the press was considered by Wilson and his aides but, anticipating furor from publishers, scrapped in favor of a law empowering the Postmaster General to open all second- and third-class mail and instigate charges against publishers of newspapers and magazines containing disloyal and seditious material. All over America schoolbooks were examined by local, mostly self-appointed committees for possible harboring of songs, poems, stories, and essays by German authors, no matter how far back in time they may have been or how distinguished.

To this day it is unclear why President Wilson instituted so thorough, so total, a war government and encouraged widest possible direct citizen action. He was aware of what he was doing: "It is not an army we must shape," he declared shortly after declaration of war, "it is a nation." But why shape an entire nation, why the manifest overkill in simply meeting war needs? The barrage of propaganda from the government was mild in World War II compared with the First World War. Again, why? It is hard not to suppose that Wilson was engaged by intent in two wars: the first, the war against Germany; the second, a war against what were to his mind the cultural and linguistic, perhaps even genetic impurities which had entered his beloved "city as on a hill" with the vast waves of immigration from both Eastern Europe and Asia. Theodore Roosevelt had been voluble in his dislike of what he called "hyphenated Americans" and Wilson appears to have shared T.R.'s distaste and also passion to see the fabled melting pot bubbling away at high heat. The almost fanatical search for German spies in America, for ordinary pro-Germans indeed, may have covered a fear and distrust of all the newly arrived in America. This was the age par excellence in America for eugenics groups concerned with purity of American blood and also for Americanist societies equally concerned with purity of ideas and allegiance.

Congress of course settled everything beginning in early 1919 by scuttling in record time the whole apparatus of the war state. It was not long before Army-Navy Stores were blossoming in every community and meatless Tuesdays were abandoned, and the last of the anti-Kaiser posters eroded away by weather, though a full decade would be required for the retirement of Liberty Steak and return of hamburger. All of this was theoretically what every American had been impatiently waiting for, the end of war restrictions, of Four-Minute Men with their insufferable pomposities, of Neighborhood Watchers snooping around, relaying gossip, of the ridiculous but patriotic glass bowls in every living room gathering the tinfoil from chewing-gum packages, and all that.

But within a year many Americans found themselves perversely missing the war and the Great Crusade. Peace was by no means an unqualified blessing. Inflation—or HCL as it was then popularly called, "high cost of living"—was murderous. Employment had been steady and well-paid during the war when cost-plus contracts were common. Profits had been good; several thousand millionaires were made by the war. There had been salutary economic and social reforms under the pressure of supporting the war. There had been less discrimination against minorities. Women, by virtue of taking the places of men called to service, were in the limelight as never before. That fact together with the sharply diminished role of hard liquor during the war surely helped the causes of the 18th Amendment in 1919 and the 19th a year later.

Other aspects of the war on the home front were also missed: the moral crusade and all its appurtenances had been collectively fulfilling. The First World War was a singing war, in trenches and home front alike, as the Second World War was emphatically not. There were the spirited parades at home, the familiar sight of Our Boys in uniform waiting to go Over There, the bond rallies with all one's favorite stars of Hollywood and Broadway, lots of spontaneous noise. There was one stillness, though, that almost everyone noticed and liked: the stillness of an atmosphere purged of strikes and lockouts and of the bitter acrimony of intervention versus isolation in the war. Instead there was something of what the English philosopher, L.P. Jacks, called "the spiritual peace that war brings."

The truth, the poignant truth, was that America was feeling a sense of national unity, of cohesion, and of single-mindedness it never had felt in its history: not in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, not in the period leading up to and then following the bloody Civil War. Southerner and Northerner, Easterner and Westerner were brought together in one national army, fighting not each other but a common, hated enemy. We were engaged in the Great Crusade, and we fought, unlike some of our European Allies, for morality, for democracy made safe in the world, not for crass reasons of mere national interest. National war brought, as it so often has in modern times, the sense of war community and also national community. People liked it.

A second major collective experience for Americans in the Great War, one also the subject of frequent editorials and magazine articles, was the immense reinforcement given to the American idea of progress. Bryce had commented, in a whole chapter, on what he called the Fatalism of the Multitude in America, the ingrained conviction that America was exceptional, was the mighty creature of a fated destiny denied other countries in the world. Bryce said that it was no Tyranny of the Majority, as Tocqueville had claimed, which made for a certain uniformity of American thought, a distinct unwillingness to buck public opinion, but

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rather a sense that whatever was happening was a part of a great destiny that was unique to America and not to be opposed lightly.

The war gave immense impetus to this conviction. Before the war was even finished, there was a national sense that the Americans, Our Boys, Over There, were the true winners of the holy war against the Beast of Berlin. That American entrance into the war made a difference is not to be denied. But that Our Boys possessed a native Know How, Can Do, and No Fault in battle, outstandingly superior to European soldiers was, well, a little something else. Still, Mark Twain had prepared Americans for this feeling of inherent, ingrained superiority to the Europeans in his *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and *Innocents Abroad* in which, with side-slapping humor, he demonstrated how American homespun had it all over monarchical valor. The American people loved it, and when a good war came along like that of 1917-1918, it was a good time for dilating once again on the native genius of Americans.

Thus the appearance of the Great American Myth in 1918: that Our Boys—with minimum training in the camps, with short notice, unfamiliarity with the topography of Flanders Fields—had nevertheless outfought man to man the German and also the Allied soldiers. I have no difficulty whatever in remembering conversations among elders which would begin as follows: "The reason Our Boys were so superior to European soldiers was . . . " and then would follow any one of a dozen possible reasons ranging from the fact that they fought with the strength of 10 because their hearts were pure all the way to the alleged fact that all of Our Boys grew up on farms where they not only had good fresh milk and eggs but also, from boyhood, squirrel rifles which made them expert riflemen before they were out of high school. The European fuddy-duddies just didn't have a chance. (May I say parenthetically here, if you don't believe me, do, as I did nostalgically some years ago, go to bound volumes of some of the most popular magazines of wartime and through the 1920's, such as: *The Literary Digest*, *Everybody's*, *American*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Review of Reviews*, and for the young at the time, *American Boy* and *Youth's Companion*. But there were many others.)

It was, to repeat, a good war for America; good politically, or so it was widely felt; good economically; and good psychologically, spiritually. America was at last inside modernity; it had in effect been dragged in by the Wilson war government and by the sheer impact of the war on traditional American values. Not again would the United States be as culturally separated from the rest of the world, as intellectually parochial.

The pores of American society had been opened. A new kind of individualism was to be seen; directed not against the national government as of yore but against the moral codes of family, local community, and church. There was greater informality in public; language became less formal, less stilted. Dress for both sexes relaxed considerably in its prewar dictates. Gin flowed in the 20's, flappers were endlessly photographed, cigarettes omnipresent, and, Freud having become popular, much discussion of repressions, complexes, and the relativity of morals.

So did the idea of progress flourish in the 20's. It may have become moribund in Europe after the war and its devastating assault there, but not in America—neither among intellectuals nor the laity. Marxism, which, like Freudianism, was permeating intellectual life in the 20's, had its guarantee of progress for the proletariat at least, provided a little blood was spilled at the barricades; liberals were still ringing changes on Herbert Croly's prewar book title, *The Promise of American Life*; and as far as the ordinary American was concerned, plaques hung from countless walls, at office and in home with the words

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"Don't Knock Progress." To help out, the French exported, no doubt gladly, Couéism to America, and millions could be heard, privately or publicly, repeating: "Day by day in every way I am becoming better and better."

As if to confirm the reality of progress in America, a cultural renaissance took place in the 20's; a genuine renaissance. Some wars seem to produce cultural renaissances. There were the Persian Wars at the beginning of the fifth century B.C. in Greece, the later Punic Wars out of which came Rome's grandeur, the Spanish war preceding and attending England's Age of Elizabeth, and so on. There is certainly nothing automatic or foreordained about war and cultural renaissance, but the larger truth is that there has been a reasonably close relation throughout history between war and civilization just as between war and the state. The hold that war and its disciplines have upon the individual can't help but lessen the weight of old and possibly constricting conventions and thus liberate the creative mind for at least a short period. Ever since the French Enlightenment, when so many philosophes were writing their plans for perpetual peace, war has had a bad press. Perhaps today in the nuclear age, it's better that way. But it is indisputable in comparative history that wars and civilization's advances—its spurts—are closely connected.

The 1920's was technologically resplendent, of course, with the automobile and radio making immense changes in social and cultural respects. But equally notable was the eruption of genius and high talent in the arts. The 20's was the best decade for the creative imagination since the 1850's (when Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, Hawthorne, and Whitman produced their classics): in the novel, Faulkner, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Dos Passos, Dreiser, and many others of like talent; in poetry, Wallace Stevens, Frost, Robinson, Williams, and living abroad mostly, Eliot and Pound. Mencken was at his height; so was O'Neill in the drama. And nowhere did renaissance lights shine more brilliantly than in jazz and in the film, in each of which America commenced a world influence that has only recently shown signs of waning. Finally, it was in the 20's that America

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found its civil religion, in sports and in icons of the Ruths, Cobbs, Dempseys, Granges, and others—names which seem still to come trippingly off the tongue.

I turn now to another aspect of the 20's, one that I shall stay with for the rest of the lecture. This was the decade in which the political intellectual, what the French call the *politique*, made his arresting entry into American culture, and with him an idea that would remain lustrous for all the years down to the present moment: the idea of the national, political community; a national community to replace what were perceived as moribund forms of community such as the family, local community, church, and so on.

It is useful to point out first, though, that the political intellectual of the 20's had his predecessor in the war intellectual of 1917-1918. President Wilson was nothing if not a political intellectual himself, and, as I have already suggested, seeing the war as he so ardently did, as a struggle for American minds and America herself in need of afflatus, he brought to his government artists, novelists, journalists, academic scholars, and others who, without being forced to depart their accustomed places in the world of arts and letters, could yet aid the war effort by simply turning their talents to the cause of the war against Germany. Individuals of the stature of John Dewey, Isaiah Bowman, Guy Stanton Ford, Carl Becker among academics; Walter Lippmann from journalism; Samuel Hopkins Adams, novelist; and Joseph Pennell, artist; all presented arms with pen and brush.

A group of about 30 scholars and journalists and some businessmen met through much of the war secretly in the basement at nights of the old American Geographical Society building, there to help, at the President's strong request, in preparing the government for the eventual peace table. Here drafts of the Fourteen Points were prepared, with Lippmann having a particularly influential role here.

The emergence in numbers of the political intellectual in the 1920's was thus yet another consequence in some degree of the Great War. It was a kind of clerisy, a political clerisy, that emerged in behalf of the provident state. There were Dewey, Charles Beard, Charles Merriam (who had worked closely and confidentially with President Wilson during the war) among academics. Outside the academy, and profoundly influential, were the likes of Lippmann, Lewis Mumford, Herbert Croly, Waldo Frank, Stuart Chase, Oswald Villard of *The Nation*, Harold Laski—English, but closely affiliated with American interests and issues.

Few of these knew each other personally. Yet, taken together, they constituted a clerisy, a political clerisy, its sworn objective that of reforming the American political community. All of them had been connected in one way or other with the Great War; all were sensitively aware of the change that had come over Americans, however briefly, during the war, a change, as I have noted, that comprised a deep sense of war community and an equally poignant awareness of American progress, American fatalism, destiny, future fulfillment. Both the war community and the American fatalism were charged with the moral dimension.

To the political minds I am referring to, it seemed a pity for America to lose its sense of moral community and progress. Why not create, as William James had recommended, a moral equivalent of war in order to enjoy and thrive on the virtues of war? John Dewey expressed himself positively on this: much, he thought, of the Great War would hang on. It was indeed Dewey's call to action for something larger than scholarship and philosophy in the academy.

Dewey had long been obsessed by the idea of community. A staunch Hegelian before he worked his way to pragmatism, he seems to have absorbed permanently the idea of the Hegelian national community as set forth in *Philosophy of Right* and other major works. He never forgot his native rural Vermont, nor did he ever return to rural America. He was a product of great nationally minded universities: Johns Hopkins, Michigan, Chicago, and finally Columbia. Dewey preceded Charles Horton Cooley by 10 years in the teaching of community at the University of Michigan. When he transferred to Chicago, he commenced a series of experiments in the construction of the ideal classroom. His constant predicate was community, and he described the school as, ideally, a "miniature community."

In the 1920's, by then in New York, Dewey published his *Individualism Old and New*. The key to the book lies in a long chapter titled "The Lost Individual." There was also his seminal *The Public and Its Problems*, which became a veritable charter to the new clerisy. Democracy he defined here as "the idea of community itself." He cites Woodrow Wilson's *The New Freedom*: "Everywhere . . . relationships are largely great impersonal concerns, with organizations, not with other individuals." What must be done, Dewey asks in a long chapter titled "Search for the Great Community": "What are the conditions under which it is possible for the Great Society to approach more closely and vitally the status of the Great Community, and thus take form in genuinely democratic societies and states?"

There we have, superbly stated, evocatively and almost thrillingly, a theme, a quest, that has remained important in the American reform canon from John Dewey and Walter Lippmann through Franklin Roosevelt down to Governor Cuomo. How, in a word, to convert society into community. Community is a loaded word. The Romans wisely placed *communis* (the root of *Communitas*) in a different declension from *socius* (the root of *societas*). Never the twain shall meet, said the wise *patres conscripti*, as if to warn: You can call a camel a horse, but that does not make it one. You can twist rhetorically society, the great society, into a community, but that doesn't make it one. The fact that a national war—which has but one objective, destruction of the enemy—brings disparate groups and classes into the feeling of community, but only in respect to one purpose, the war and defeating the enemy, doesn't mean that a multipurpose, a hydra-valued and myriad-interest society in peace can be molded, like a twist of dough in a bakery, into a community. So might the Roman Fathers have wisely said.

But not our American Fathers in the 20's. It was to be Great Community instead of Great Society. Beginning early in the 20's the catch-question "We Planned in War, Why Not in Peace?" was to be found in more and more books, journals, and lectures. The memory of the Great War and its venture into national community served advo-

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cates of a corporate state, a socialist state, a national community more abundantly than did the tracts and treatises from Europe on these matters.

It is interesting to see how synchronously the literary and the philosophical sections of the 20's cultural efflorescence worked together in the quest for national community. It was almost as though an invisible conductor presided with baton over the scene. Dewey, Lippmann, and Croly offered philosophical arguments to the effect that all older forms of community were moribund, thus making national community imperative. With a wave of his baton the invisible conductor brought such mighty literary talents as Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson, Edgar Lee Masters, Ellen Glasgow into action. They, in novel, short story, and poem, in *Main Street*, *Winesburg, Ohio*, and *Spoon River Anthology* concurred enthusiastically with the philosophical section. Yes, the American small town and its family, church, and neighborhoods were all moribund, suffocating, tyrannizing, over their Carol Kennicotts and George Babbits. *Ecrasez l'infâme*.

And, almost as though activated by a baton, came an answering, or conjoining, threnody of how bad things are in the city too. The city was the place of broken dreams, of frustrated pilgrims, of empty lives, of vast financial networks of power engaged in rebutting individuals of talent, sentencing the whole population to anonymity bordering on death. Dreiser, Dos Passos, Hart Crane were among those who painted the great cities in these lines and colors, but there were many others in the 20's, and of comparable genius.

The individual was, as Dewey and others iterated and reiterated, Lost; Lost in either the stupefyingly dull and banal small town or else lost in the thoroughfares of Metropolis. Lost, alienated, estranged, in need of—and now our invisible conductor has called for the horns of the *politiques* which respond instantly in a timely diapason representing the answer: community, but the Great Community of the entire nation; nothing intermediate, nothing less!

One wonders whether a single reader of the best-selling literature in the 1920's on the tyrannical, mindless village or small town, on the frightening anonymity and soullessness of the city—say, San Francisco, St. Louis, or even Chicago and New York—and the Lost Individual as well as the Lost Generation, ever stopped in his or her reading long enough to wonder whether or in what measure there was any real verisimilitude in the author's stereotypes? Probably not. Such is the power of a plausible ideal type; and such is the power of the writing classes over the reading classes.

The political clerisy I describe was, through the 1920's at least, remarkably free of the party ideologies which would become clamant in the 30's and thereafter. Before the onset of the Depression, Herbert Hoover had the high respect of many who wanted to see the state, with the help of the learned and the administratively wise, become a community. Reading the Deweys, Mumfords, Chases, and Lippmanns as they wrote in the 20's, one is not particularly struck by the ideology in the ordinary sense. The clerisy in the beginning sought to be transideological if not quite transpolitical.

The New Deal and Franklin Roosevelt helped change much of that. But it also brought out in sharp relief the continuing theme of the national community and also memory of the Great War. It is generally agreed that Marxists, Keynesians, and Fabians had little if any influence on the structure and theory of the New Deal. There was, after all, never a theory of the New Deal to be influenced.

The New Deal was an exhumation of World War I structures in the first place and thereafter helter-skelter adaptations, readaptations, and patchings-up of the various structures brought into being. Nothing worked so far as the essentials of the Depression were involved. After a flicker of hope in 1937, there was a recession that put things back to almost 1932 status. In the end it was World War II that ended the Great Depression.

What did succeed, more or less, though, in a pragmatic way, was the creation by Roosevelt and his aides of a war community without armed war and sedition acts. Without loss of time, the New Deal began in the resurrection of the old War Industries Board, the Labor Board, the various agricultural and pricing commissions of World War I. Some of the principals of the Great War came back to man the New Deal boards and commissions, among them Bernard Baruch, Hugh Johnson, and Herbert Bayard Swope. Above all, the centralization that had characterized Wilson's war government characterized FDR's depression government. Roosevelt used the imagery of war often in his speeches and didn't hesitate to liken himself to general and the American people to an army. Everywhere, he suggested, discipline was needed. As William Schambra of the American Enterprise Institute has noted in an illuminating paper, Roosevelt specifically likened his work to that of making the nation the substitute for the old and now archaic community of the village and the neighborhood. Said FDR: "We have been extending to our national life the old principles of the local community . . . the many are the neighbors. . . . Nationally we must think of them as a whole and not just by sections or by states." Or, Roosevelt might have added, by families, towns, churches, cooperatives, and mutual aid groups. For in practice he disdained them too.

As the New Deal endured, it became more and more direct and unmediated in its thrust. New agencies for dealing with one or another aspect of the Depression tended not merely to bypass state governments and local communities, not to mention churches and other voluntary associations, but actually weaken these intermediate groups and governments. As in World War I, there were posters (the Blue Eagle!), parades, and evening marches through neighborhoods, all signaling at one and the same time the war against the Depression and the ever-present prospects of victory soon. FDR remained insouciant and also commanding in presence throughout, personalizing handsomely the centralization of state.

The Great Depression was Crisis No. 2 in the saga of America the Great Community. It meshed nicely with Crisis No. 3, which was the Second World War and which, at long last, ended the Great Depression. Roosevelt said just after Pearl Harbor that it was now time for Dr. New Deal to be replaced by Dr. Win the War; but in truth both doctors worked together throughout. In no appreciable respect was the crisis machinery created by the Depression dislodged by the onset of World War II. A continuity of crisis machinery is one of the more notable aspects of the story of the

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American welfare state and, more particularly, the dream of the Great Community in America.

Seemingly nothing disturbs the growth and momentum of the crisis machinery of the welfare state. Not economic prosperity; some say the welfare state grows as fast under boom as recession. A fourth crisis came along in the 1960's, that of the war in Vietnam and on the campuses of major universities in America. For some reason President Johnson spurned Great Community as his landmark, preferring the Great Society. Perhaps an ex-schoolteacher was refusing to violate further the word Community.

Community, with its powers of enchantment, is as dangerous a companion of politics as religion. We know the hazards of the latter.

The appeal of the idea of national community is undiminished in our time. The symbols and impedimenta are everywhere to be seen. Community threatens to become the battleground of politics, replacing the enemy in this respect. Community is more siren-like, more seductive than economic growth and the size of budget deficits. To be sure, in some minds the goal of national community includes the great corporations, as in some of the presentations of Felix Rohatyn, Robert Reich, and the *New York Review*. Governor Cuomo was presumably not excluding the corporate giants from the American national family he described in San Francisco before the Democratic Convention in 1984. By my count there were 23 references to the family; not one addressed to the household. America as community, family, wagon train won the hearts and minds of those present along with more than a few others in the listening audience at large. Within less than an hour's stroking of the theme of community, he became a presidential candidate in all but declaration.

Community, with its powers of enchantment, is as dangerous a companion of politics as religion. We know the hazards of the latter. For politics shares with religion a capacity—not to be found in anything economic—for inspiring dreams of redemption. The passions aroused by religion and politics are from the same furnace in the human heart. The state as theocracy repels most of us, thinking inevitably of past and present instances of it in the world, in early New England, in present-day Iran.

The same skepticism doesn't seem to prevail, however, with respect to the vision of community. The original voices of national community—Dewey, Lippmann, Croly—back in the 1920's were unfamiliar with the structure of modern bureaucracy simply because there wasn't any, or much, in America at that time. We cannot blame them for their well-intentioned but inevitably naive vision of the national community as simply an effortless expansion of the village, with nothing else involved. The 1930's taught them differently, of course, when the administrative structure of the New Deal appeared under the name of community.

The ideal of national community excites the imagination and seems to narcotize the nerves of caution. It is easy to imagine citizens largely satisfied with a government committed to the common defense and the general welfare. It is impossible to conceive of a satisfied citizenry living in what is proclaimed to be a community. Expectations would mount perilously. It would be hard to find a better recipe for permanent unrest.

The idea of national community is supported by an assumed inevitability of a certain theoretical scheme of progress. Democracy began, the scheme informs, with the small town, the church, the school, the family, and cooperatives of one or other kind. But this democracy is gone and can never be recovered. (One wonders at this point what 3,000 reporters were visiting last winter in Iowa and New Hampshire if not small towns meeting in churches, schools, and the like.) Democracy has passed through the purely political stage represented by our Constitution, through the economic state represented first by free private enterprise, then by government regulation, and is now reaching its highest stage, national community.

It is interesting that the same sketch of inevitable progress carries a theory of the true center of democratic government. In the beginning, the center was the colonial legislature. Stage two was the passing of the center to a national Congress, under the Constitution. But, it is argued, under the iron discipline of the march of history, democracy, true democracy, passed from Congress as center to the presidency. The President is, the script reads, the authentic center of national democracy, for he alone represents the entire people. This theory of progress was doing quite well until yet another state was introduced a few years ago, one that appears to be flourishing in certain legal circles. Not Congress, not the President, but the federal judge is the true Atlas of modern democracy. Think how long, the apologetics suggest, desegregation, apportionment, abortion legalization, and abolition of school prayers would have taken if these manifestly legislative acts had had to go through Congress and the presidency. For the federal judiciary they were the work of moments, by comparison. The federal judge, it is said, is untrammeled by the necessity of being elected, by the sweat and stench of politics, by any political obligation whatever. Properly instructed by critical legal studies, he is the reincarnation of Solon and Solomon. To bring the dreamed-of national community into existence through Congress and the presidency would take years, possibly decades. A few Supreme Court decisions, and the basic work would be done. In any event, it is no exaggeration to say that the mission of a centralized, unitary, omnicompetent, national community has reached a number of notable law schools. Legislation, not interpretation, is the proper business of the Benthamite legal mind.

Are there other currents of thought at the present time, counter to those I have been discussing? It seems to me there are. It can hardly have escaped the attention of everyone that the present structure of the welfare state, the framework of what is being called national community, is the outcome rarely of careful, unhasty thought and contemplation, but rather of crisis and therefore crisis-thought. It was the crisis of World War I that initiated the momentum, the crisis of Depression that established it, and the crisis of World War II that brought to its essentially present form the idea of the welfare state or national community. Looking back 75 years it is hard to find a single major national event that has not somehow furthered the cause of the central-

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ized, unitary bureaucracy we live by. I believe, although I cannot be sure, that more and more responsible people are giving thought to alternative patterns, not driven by the spur of crisis.

I am struck too by the continuing rise of interest in intermediate groups, associations, and patterns of indirect rather than direct authority. Such interest was largely lacking in this country—though not in Europe, especially France—even three decades ago. It is one thing for the planning government to look out on an imagined mass of 235 million discrete, even isolated individuals, and it is something else for that planning mind to look instead at the reality of the groups and associations in which that 235 million people tend for the most part to live. Such groups as family, neighborhood, church, school, and township are far from being excrescences; they are very much parts of human personalities. Interestingly, perhaps auspiciously, the idea of intermediation in government and society appears to be transideological at the present time. Both the left and the right have discovered it in recent years. They do not have the specters of dead communities before their eyes as do the prophets of the unitary national community. They do not see the population as one of lost, alienated, estranged souls striving vainly and hopelessly to live in households, grasp at religion, be tormented by job, and live in asphalt jungles. And, as noted, they see very clearly the importance and popularity of groups intermediate to individual and state. Such is the seeming spread of the concept of intermediation that one of the best articles of the year on the subject appeared a few months ago in *The New Republic* (an admirable journal, of course), but I couldn't help thinking of its old founders, Croly, Dewey, and Lippmann, spinning, surely, in their graves. There is no talismanic power in the idea of intermediation; it will never attract enthusiastic crowds or rallies any more than a sound military strategy or reform in the budgetary process will. But it's a retreat from crisis-thinking.

It is within that theoretical context that the recent rejuvenation of the states, or many of them, is best seen. The Brookings Institution report some months ago on 14 states the Institution had been studying for years is contributory. These states, far from going into passive retrenchment as the result of revenue-sharing and other deployment measures taken by the federal government, proved themselves both buoyant and innovative in the new life given cultural as well as economic and social services. Some journalists have commented on the unwonted, almost forgotten, political liveliness—these days—of the state capitals and the increase in the quality of those in positions of leadership.

There is a general, perhaps rising movement of the times perhaps best called the Antibureaucracy. There is more awareness of the sheer fact of the national, federal bureaucracy; and with this awareness a focused hostility. The Antibureaucracy reminds me of an inverted cargo cult. The people are pleased with the usufruct of central bureaucracy, but instead of praying to, they curse the cargo ships. They see it as Karl Marx did, as "an appalling parasitic body," and as Max Weber did, "an iron cage . . . filled with robots." Paul Volcker, from his vantage point of member of a presidential commission to seek the causes of an apparent decline in the quality of government service, opined that a vicious circle is created: the lower the quality of the service, the more the confidence of the citizen in his government is shaken; and the more respect for government goes down, the worse the quality of those seeking employment. Something like a Perestroika is needed in this country, and who knows? It may be under way; not only in the federal government but at the great corporations like IBM and General Motors.

Finally, there is a substantial difference in the intellectual scene regarding government and the social order, one that 30 years ago I would never have expected to see in my lifetime. A second ideology was, as we now know, just beginning to come into existence in the 50's, a conservative ideology, an entry that within another decade or two made a two-ideology, bipolar, political society. Historians had for years been proving that a conservative movement would never rise in the United States; the reasons given were that America had never known a feudal stage in its history, and this, it was said, was a prime requirement in all countries for an emergent conservative mentality. Well, either America did have a feudal stage or else one isn't necessary after all for the rise of a distinctly conservative political ideology.

In any event, it would seem that conservatism, however defined from one week to the next, is here and is likely to remain for awhile. It is of little consequence in this respect how the Reagan coalition cracks up. The important forces are institutional: there are large, wealthy conservative foundations, institutes and think tanks, respected columnists, and a regular harvest of books and articles which somehow make the best-seller lists. Intellectually, conservatism is no more monolithic than is liberalism. Each can seem chameleonic most of the time, especially to the true believer. We can't define ideology either, but we do know that it's there. Through its 200 years of history, mostly in Europe, conservatism has commonly manifested a serious interest in institutions like the family, church, the local community, the private sector for their value as buffering or mediating forces and for their role in preserving a more diverse and pluralistic social order. All indications are that we shall remain a bipolar society ideologically for awhile yet.

In conclusion, if I am correct in my impressions—and they are hardly mine alone—of a gathering distrust of mammoth bureaucracies and their stultifying effects upon human energies, of a distinct renascence of the states, of a rising interest in the whole theory and policy of the intermediate strata and groups and of their vital influences upon the individual's perception of himself as well as of the national state, and of an intellectual pluralism in this country that was largely absent 30 years ago, if I am correct in this, then surely there will be a rethinking of the state of community—in both senses of the word "state"—in America. In addition to the by now well-ensconced, crisis-born, renaissance-lifted idea of the nation as a community of individuals resembling the famous frontispiece of Hobbes's Leviathan, that is, the unitary, centralized national community, there will be, there may already be, a second envisagement of community, one sprung perhaps from the ancient ideal of a *communitas communitatum*, a community of communities: perhaps even a change in our national inscription from *e pluribus unum* to *in pluribus unum*.

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TYRANNY BY SLOTH *by George Garrett*

When I say that I thank you for asking me here to speak to you, that I thank you I am here, I have to confess that I am flying in the face of the latest status ritual practiced by many of my colleagues in the scribbling professions. The latest thing, as you may already have learned (I am a slow learner and also somewhat out of touch), is to prove your high place in the hierarchy of contemporary American writers by *not* showing up for scheduled and promised appearances and events. The greater luminaries simply don't arrive. At the next aspiring level, the basic idea is to cancel out, offering no good reason or proposing an obviously implausible one, about 24 hours prior to the event. And now that the word is out, there are many places, particularly in the status-conscious groves of Academe, where their disappointment and shame and contempt are clearly visible, as if etched, if and when you actually arrive at the right place at more or less the right time. It means they have been snookered one more time into wasting some of their limited resources on an obvious second-rater.

Of course, in the literary world other coincidental funny things have been happening lately—interesting mix-ups, for example. My Charlottesville neighbor Ann Beattie swears to me that she was recently flown out to a school in Ohio for a visit and a reading (and good money) and realized, after she got there, and no joke, that everybody thought she was Ann Tyler. The name on the posters and the programs was Ann Tyler. The name on the check proved to be Ann Tyler. She was introduced as Ann Tyler. Ann Beattie grinned and went through with it, although for some reason she chickened out and read from her own work and not Ms. Tyler's.

In another recent incident—every chairman and toastmaster's recurring nightmare—novelist Nicholas Delbanco, professor at Michigan and one of the most elegant and eloquent of introducers, was asked, on about 10 minutes' notice, to fill in for a colleague (who had been taken suddenly ill) by introducing Margaret Atwood to an expectant audience. Or so he understood his assignment. Quickly he prepared a few notes. Then he ran across campus to Rackham Hall, rushed on stage and up to the podium where he offered up a fulsome, deep-voiced, and impeccably suave introduction of the life and works of Ms. Atwood. Turned then, smiling, to greet her as she came to the podium. Only to discover, to his almost unspeakable dismay, that he was looking directly into the familiar and glowering face of Margaret Drabble. . . .

Anyway, for better and for worse, here I am. I am not, however, completely alone. I have brought along with me my invisible and fictional companion, a character named John Towne, out of a novel of mine called *Poison Pen*. Not because I want to inflict him upon you. Not at all. But mainly because I can't trust him, left alone and behind in the pages of his home. Better I should keep an eye on him.

For those of you—the overwhelming majority no doubt—who don't know him and never heard of him, let me just quote a few (honest to God) journalistic descriptions of the fellow:

Publisher's Weekly: "a vulgar scapegrace"
New York Times Book Review: "a low life crank"
National Review: "a coke-befuddled redneck"
The Washington Times: "a man of *unsavory* character"
Charlottesville Daily Progress: "a character of exquisite vulgarity"
Village Voice: " . . . an academic charlatan of the lowest order"
Book World: "a full-time con artist, misanthrope and lecher"
Chicago Tribune: "a lecherous, misanthropic, failed academic"
Village Voice: "an exceptionally sleazy picaro"

They didn't even like him much down home in my native Southland. Here's the *Greensboro News*: "a loathsome, racist, crude and gruesome creep."

Well, you get the idea. An interesting consensus of reactions.

One thing about Towne, he's got a lot of advice to offer.

For instance, true to character and form, he wanted me to build this little talk around something that interested *him*, namely the truth and consequences of a headline and story in the *Charlottesville Daily Progress* (Oct. 25, 1987): "Aging Sexpot Van Doren Tells All." Towne finds it especially exemplary of the inward and spiritual truth of our times. He is particularly fond of the following paragraph, which he takes to be a better than average example of the fine-tuned complexity and subtlety of contemporary morality: "Was the casting couch a Hollywood fixture in those days?"

" 'Yes. I found myself on it—but I only did it because I wanted to,' she said. 'I never went to bed with anyone I didn't want to. I had opportunities, but I didn't do it. Had I done so, I might have had better parts.' "

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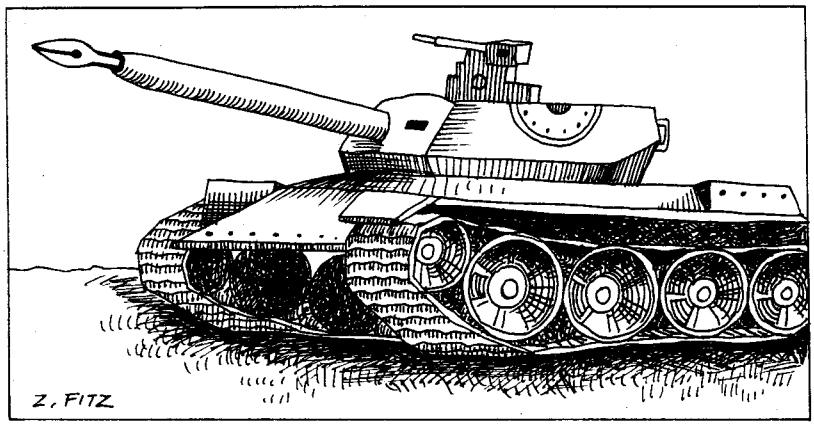

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Well. Towne has got a point. It is pertinent. I mean if Joe Biden had been an actress instead of a U.S. Senator, he might have sounded exactly like that. . . .

"Surely you don't plan to talk about *literature* and the (pardon the expression) literary life," Towne argued.

I agreed. Partly because in one aspect of one thing I find myself more or less in agreement with him. Towne's hydraulic law of uniform corruption—that is, that corruption everywhere seeks its own level and that, thus, all aspects of our life and world, at any given instant, are equally corrupt—seems to have some real truth to it. A corollary to the law, however, is that it doesn't apply to the literary world, which is unquestionably on a completely different level of corruption. Indeed, sad experience teaches me that it is hard to imagine any social unit as riddled with corruption as the American literary scene. My own personal opinion, on the basis of anecdotal evidence, is that next to the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, the Court of the Emperor Caligula would look like an early session of the Council of Trent.

More serious, however, is the fact that to the mundane practices of misinformation and disinformation, as widely practiced by our press, which at least has the general goal of national destabilization to justify its ways and means, the literary folk (whose mostly unspoken consensus is so iron-bound as to ignore all political differences and cross the boundaries of social class) are dedicated to rhetorical games played at the expense of the full dimensions of the truth.

For example, although there have been some debates concerning matters of form, aesthetic arguments, in the world of poetry, serious questioning or discussion of any of the serious issues of our time have been almost completely absent in American poetry since the deaths of Pound and Eliot and Frost and most recently John Ciardi.

Saddest of all, nobody seems to miss this. Or them, very much.

I collect whole notebooks of splendid little examples, of which here is only one, only a typical and very recent one. Here is John Gregory Dunne in his piece "This Year in Jerusalem," in the December issue of *Esquire*: "Surrounded by soldiers as I waited to pass through the metal detectors and security check, I was struck once again by the way the Israeli military was woven into the country's social fabric. In the United States, soldiers are those weird looking young men we usually see only in airports, this one with his hair too short, that one with the tattoo and the mottled complexion and the flat hill accent, the black lance corporal here, the Hispanic Pfc. over there; in other words, no one we know. At the trial that morning the soldiers had the sentient mainstream faces so rarely seen in the contemporary American services." Of course, all this is layered in appropriate and protective kinds of irony. A baklava of clever observation. He doesn't really mean all that. Forced to a final wall, he can always admit that he really doesn't mean anything. Meantime, however, in the form of an entirely typical piece of contemporary literary rhetoric, you have an aside, passing as an observation, a matter of opinion told as a fact as it were. And which is, in fact, a very lightly encoded cryptogram, a cheerful little message sent to other true believers, slightly disguised as a commonplace, unexceptional stereotypical comment about our volunteer armed services, offering a gesture of gratuitous, if relative, contempt for our country and its people, paid for by a little tip, a shrug and a *pourboire* of self-contempt . . . *"in other words no one we know."*

I sometimes honestly think that a certain kind of liberal, equally the *literary* liberal, uses the overt profession of personal guilt as justification for an almost murderous contempt of fellow man.

All the assumptions behind Dunne's deft little aside are so familiar to us as to be more or less harmless if we notice them at all. They stand like crumbling statues in a weedy overgrown public park or garden. Not neutral, mind you, but more or less harmless . . . unless and until you allow yourself to consider the possibility that the relentless and largely unquestioned documentation and consumption of such distortions of reality can add up sooner or later to what constitutes a killing dose of poison. Meanwhile, though, it all has a certain sly charm. Even the little instances of pure and simple ignorance are socially if not rhetorically redeeming.

I said *largely* unquestioned. Not completely. We are here on this occasion to celebrate the existence and survival of *Chronicles*, which asks some questions and answers others which would otherwise be ignored.

And that is what I really should be talking about and what we should be thinking about: questions and answers in the unceasing search for the truth.

Whenever I go to work in the morning and go through the entrance of old Cabell Hall at the University of Virginia, I pass under some words of Thomas Jefferson: "Here we are not afraid to follow Truth wherever it may lead nor to tolerate any error so long as reason is left free to combat it."

Some words of Jefferson ought to be my theme.

Here Towne butted in and argued.

"Don't talk Jefferson at them," he said. "You give them Jefferson, they'll give you Sally Hemmings."

"Hey, I said. "I am not speaking at a Norman Lear testimonial."

"Lucky you," says he. "But it's all pretty much the same old thing."

"We'll see."

"Well," he said. "If you have to talk about Mr. Jefferson, go for it. Don't give them the sweet violins."

I tried my best to explain to him that in my own Episcopal Church even the *hard sayings* of Jesus Christ have now been put on the back burner, if not actually banned. How can I give them the iron fist of Thomas Jefferson?

"Here's how," he said. "As an example of exactly the kind of thought or idea which ought to be part of any full and free discussion or debate about ourselves, but which is not, because we are these days so concerned about monitoring our thoughts, even as we permit ourselves the crudest possible luxury and license by using the worst words our language allows."

"Look," I said. "Here we are living at a time when everything you can think of has been weighted with political symbolism and significance. Even baseball teams (it was racist to wish for the Minnesota Twins' win in the Series); *musical instruments*—if you listen at all to what might accurately be called Radio Daniel Schorr, I mean National

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Public Radio, you know that the flute and the acoustic guitar are the instruments of compassion and that compassion is a virtue exclusively reserved for the left and especially for those who most publicly assert that they have compassion; even the care and cure of dread diseases are politically weighted. Fabrics, clothing, and hair styles, bottles of beer and soda pop—it's a political mine field out there. How can I possibly say anything that will catch attention and mean anything?"

"You want me to attract their attention?" Towne asked.

In the end we compromised. From radically different points of view we both agreed that if our way of self-governing were to survive much longer—and by the way, we even in our absolute privacy allowed ourselves to consider whether survival of our ways and means of self-government is a hopeful or a baleful prospect; for *ourselves*, I mean; never mind the multitudes outside of our particular traditions and history, for whom all democratic forms are at the least exotic; anyway—we compromised on the choice of a single passage, one example among many, from the words of Thomas Jefferson, one which carries the imperative necessity of the full and free debate of issues and assumptions to a logical, if honorable extreme. . . .

Here, then, are his words, taken from a letter written in Paris and dated November 13, 1787 (a wink or two beyond two centuries ago). You probably remember them well enough: "God forbid we should ever be 20 years without a rebellion. The people cannot be all, and always, well-informed. The part which is wrong will be discontented in proportion to the importance of the facts they misconceive. If they remain quiet under such misconceptions, it is a lethargy, the forerunner of death to public liberty. . . . "

(I skip a little)

"What country before ever existed a century and a half without rebellion? And what country can preserve its liberties if the rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms. The remedy is to set them right as to the facts, pardon and pacify them. What signify a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure."

No question but that is a *hard* saying. No question, either, but that it is complex, thorny with prescience and pertinence, and I think eminently relevant to our very times and this very occasion tonight.

But before we go into some of those things, try to imagine, for a moment, the uproar and outrage which would follow if any contemporary public figure, at any point in life, early or late, and in any form from letter to the editor to a diary note, had ever said such a thing.

The only one I can think of who could get away with it is Joe Biden. Because everybody would correctly assume it was just plagiarism, anyway.

Thomas Jefferson said it and seems to have meant it, too, though some of the terms he used meant different things then than now. Take tyrant, the concept of tyranny, for example. For somewhat more than 2,000 years, on up through and including the times of Thomas Jefferson, tyranny was defined and equally applied to the overzealous exercise of rigorous justice without mercy and to the squandered blessing of reflexive and thoughtless mercy without the context or foundation of rigorous justice. Thus any leader or statesman, from the citizens of the Greek city states, through every kind of emperor and monarch, absolute or benevolent, on through the rebellious generation of Jefferson, would surely and easily define our contemporary American social situation, with its elaborately formulated, indeed *codified*, absence of any system protecting the rights of the law-abiding citizens and their civilization from predatory assaults, as clearly, unequivocably tyrannical.

And, as such, it was always deemed worthy of the strongest possible kind of resistance.

The most usual and immediate response to this passage that I have received from reasonably thoughtful and thoughtfully reasonable people is that we must consider the relativity of historical context. That in the period (brief or long, depending on your own historical scheme) since Jefferson we have come to value the sanctity of human life, have come to view life, in and of itself, as precious. Certainly more precious than our ancestors viewed at least the lives of others.

This is an answer, a position which might be regarded as simply and brutally laughable, coming as it does out of this bloody, bloody century, this century whose appropriate image is of rivers, Amazons, Mississippis, Congos of human blood. Century in which even the Holocaust, defined by both intent and execution, can only be claimed to be one enormous genocidal example among many, first among many parts. . . .

It is certainly not becoming, it ill behooves anyone from this 20th century to regard Jefferson's statement as evidence of a more bloody-minded disposition or blithe disregard for the lives of others than our words and acts.

Indeed, once the idea of hypocrisy has been introduced, a good strong case can be made that Jefferson's approach, even taken by a literal mind, is closest to that of a good general, Patton, for example, whose own casualties (*and the casualties he inflicted*) were always minimal precisely because his tactics were sudden, ruthless, and anything but tentative.

Thus I can see that it can be decently and honorably maintained that certain complex and confusing issues troubling us in these times probably should have been settled in the streets, sealed in the blood of patriots and tyrants, rather than vaguely resolved in legislatures, courts, or in the press.

As to the sanctity of human life in our own country, we must never allow ourselves to forget that in fact a good many years ago we settled for the deaths of roughly 65,000 people—men, women, and children—on our highways as statistically acceptable per year. Sixty-five thousand is a number our society has somehow agreed to live with. I don't need to remind you that that is, of course, more than the total number of American dead in all the years of the Vietnam War.

Do you suppose they would consider putting up a series of black walls in honor and memory of all the dead drivers, drunk and sober alike, of America?

A possibly more plausible argument, one that is frequently heard from intellectual sources, is that (with perhaps the exception of Israeli preemptive and retaliatory strikes on

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terrorist targets) warfare as an instrument or extension of national policy, even the policy of self-defense is no longer really feasible.

Unthinkable is, I believe, the correct adjective. That there are wars going on, here and now, within and between most of the nations of the earth is a fact beyond the interest of most of these advanced thinkers.

I am reminded of the celebrated 60's, when rape seemed statistically likely to become a new national pastime and women were advised not under any circumstances ever to resist a rapist. Exactly the opposite advice is freely given in courses and seminars nowadays. I am reminded of the Navy Shark Repellent in World War II, a colorful dye which, while it evidently had no effect on sharks one way or the other, at least allowed a brief feeling of safety and security *before* the jaws clamped down.

Never mind.

Let us return to text. To Jefferson.

Clearly, despite all his good wishes and even high hopes for some measure of domestic tranquillity, he envisioned the quality which he conceived of and called liberty as enduring only in a state of constant, unrelenting testing. Interrogation by means of full debate and argument where facts are assembled and known and where reason, itself, is allowed to be and run free. Absent those conditions, he likewise clearly believed (at least on this occasion) that it was meet and right that genuinely significant issues should be sealed and settled in blood.

That, if need be — no, more accurately, *when need be* for he simply assumed that, come what may, ignorance and misconception were inevitable companions — that when need be we should be ready, willing, and able to die for and kill for our principles.

But let us be pragmatic and try to get at the heart of what he was saying as it may possibly apply to us.

One cannot (to use that lovely *media* word) *rule out* the possibility, now or ever, of bloody acts of resistance and rebellion (in whatever form) in the United States. What, after all, was the seizure of federal prisons and hostages in Atlanta and Louisiana but a clumsy act of rebellion? One cannot ever rule out the possibility. But since the race riots of the late 1940's and the late 1960's, although we have had plenty of violent events and incidents, large and small, we have witnessed no full-scale, real and honest rebellion. And for the present such a thing seems highly unlikely.

Which may well mean that, in Jefferson's own terms, we live at a time when the love of lethargy has at last replaced even the hope of preserving liberty. Maybe . . .

Or it may mean that, for the time being, resistance and rebellion must take place on the other fields where our great life and death issues are being settled.

Settled, for better and worse. Not well or deeply discussed. Many things are discussed, if only lightly debated, but next to none of the great and deep questions are being asked.

This whole problem, which ought to have attracted our attention and, at the very least, aroused the passion of intellectual anger, has been most passionately discussed *not* by any American thinker of any persuasion, but by the great Russian writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and only on one occasion — his baccalaureate address at Harvard in 1978.

You will remember it. And I hope you will refresh your memory of his words by seeking them out again. . . .

His observations are remarkable, subtle, profound, and, I think, as accurate and prescient as they are controversial. May I quote from a couple of paragraphs?

"There is yet another surprise for someone coming from the East, where the press is rigorously unified; one gradually discovers a common trend of preferences within the Western press as a whole. It is a fashion; there are generally accepted patterns of judgment and there may be common corporate interests, the sum effect being not competition but unification. Enormous freedom exists for the press, but not for the readership, because newspapers mostly give emphasis to those opinions that do not too openly contradict their own and the general trend.

"Without any censorship, in the West, fashionable trends of thought are carefully separated from those that are not fashionable.

"Nothing is forbidden, but what is not fashionable will hardly ever find its way into periodicals or books or be heard in colleges. . . . "

It continues . . .

It earned Solzhenitsyn immediate and rabid denunciation by the press he criticized. Gentle and wimpish liberals suddenly discovered the "America-Love-It-or-Leave-It" standard and applied it directly to him.

Time has only allowed the uniform derogation of Solzhenitsyn by the press to slack off a little bit. One week ago the *Washington Post* ran a lengthy feature: "Solzhenitsyn and His Message of Silence." If you were to read the article, you would have discovered that his *silence*, in this case, means that he turned down an opportunity to be interviewed by the *Washington Post*. They don't suggest that he is crazy up there in Vermont. But they do at least imply that he is keeping a low profile for a self-serving reason:

"It has even been suggested that, if Gorbachev means what he says, the work of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn might be published in the Soviet Union for the first time in more than two decades. Some of his fellow émigrés believe Solzhenitsyn is silent for that purpose too: that he not jeopardize the best chance for his return to the motherland, in word if not in deed."

A bullet wound would, of course, be considerably more painful. But I doubt if firing a bullet at him could be a more *hateful* act than writing those words.

As long as they can kill their opposition with *words*, why waste bullets on any of us?

World of words, that's where the battle — the ceaseless war of rebellion and resistance against intellectual and spiritual lethargy, and for the sake of liberty — is going on.

Things have not improved much, if at all, since Solzhenitsyn spoke. Indeed the stereotypes he noted — the sculptural museum of modern group-thinks — have acquired the patina of dignity since then. Whole topics have been declared to be off limits, beyond all legitimate discussion or even historical reconsideration. In history and the so-called social sciences, and even (alas) in the stricter sciences, especially medicine and biology, it is now widely accepted and understood that evidence which weighs against fashionable contemporary political and social positions is to be suppressed, or at least modified and limited so as not to offer

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any ammunition to the skeptical opposition. I can recall that once upon a time we laughed at science under Stalin, never dreaming that most of its practices, if not all of its excesses, would come to pass here.

In literature there are such inhibitions as the prevalent critical notion that even for the sake of verisimilitude, fictional characters must not be allowed to maintain views, prejudices, or, indeed, use words which offered stereotypical contemporary standards. Or if they do so, they must be known to be unredeemably wicked and must be *punished* for their sins. . . .

Even the exalted arena of Shakespearean criticism is not safe from this kind of agitprop scrutiny.

If I may be so bold as to second Solzhenitsyn's proposition, I would have to tell you that I have only recently returned to the 20th century from a couple of decades spent living as an expatriate, an alien, in the 16th century. And it is my best and considered judgment that then and there, in Tudor England, when the consequences—and *legal* consequences—of asking certain questions, voiced opinions, even (at times) thoughts and intentions, were deadly serious, there was probably more honest, deep-digging, and far-reaching debate and dissent than we have experienced in this free society for more than a quarter of a century.

Even under the rigors of almost absolute monarchy they were not afraid to debate not only current issues but also, maybe more important, first principles.

Of course, they had at least *some* of the same problems and concerns. Here, for example, is Sir Walter Ralegh writing in his *History of the World*: "How shall the upright and impartial judgment of man give a sentence, where opposition and examination are not admitted to give in evidence?" He then quotes from Lactantius. "They neglect their own wisdom who, without any judgment, approve the invention of those that forewent them; and suffer themselves, after the manner of beasts, to be led by them."

To which Ralegh adds his own observation, coming amazingly close to the words and views of Jefferson: "By the advantage of which sloth, dullness and ignorance is now become so powerful a tyrant, that it hath set true philosophy, psychic, and divinity in a pillory."

We are gathered to honor not the voice, but the various and sundry voices of *Chronicles*. Which, as it happens, is one of the very few and very precious forces actively engaged in the war against lethargy.

It is with words, with ideas, with facts, with questions, and, God willing, with passion that the good fight is being fought.

We are much beleaguered, more so than we would like to admit, if only for the sake of sanity. We need each other. And I am proud to be here and to be a part of all this and all that.

John Towne's cynical laughter echoes in my inner ear like a car horn in a tunnel.

"You'll be sorry. You and your big mouth!" he says. "One thing about the American Establishment, regardless of race, creed, color, country of origin, gender, or sexual preference, they will never forget and forgive."

"So what?" I say. "I never wanted to be on the Supreme Court, anyway."

GEORGE GARRETT TALKS
to Madison Smartt Bell

This interview took place on September 18 and 19, 1985, at Garrett's house in Charlottesville, not far from the University of Virginia. It is a sizable stone house, rented, with most of the available wall space covered with hastily erected brick-and-board bookcases. Not quite settled yet, Garrett and his wife, Susan, joked about how they were still living like graduate students, after 30-odd years of an extremely peripatetic career.

Bell: Why did *Death of the Fox* take so long to write?

Garrett: Partly because I was doing all these other things at the same time. I worked in Hollywood. All kind of teaching and publishing, and other stuff. And I just never knew enough to be able to do it. I didn't know what I was looking for. And there was the great explosion of Elizabethan scholarship: As fast as I would think I was reading everything I should know, 50 more books would come out. Trying to know enough to do it, handling truckloads of notes got in my way. It may have been that they were so disorganized. So I changed the model of my book from term paper to test. Which are the only two models we have when we come out of college: you write a paper or a test. So I changed it over to test and then I just closed the trunk and wrote it off the top of my head.

The down side is, two weeks after *Death of the Fox* was published I couldn't remember Ralegh's middle name if he had one, let alone any details. So when I came to do *The Succession*, which had been planned, I thought it would be real easy because I knew everything. I opened up the blank sheet of paper and I didn't know *anything*! I had to start over and do the same thing, exactly, back to square one.

Bell: The Ralegh in *Death of the Fox*, is that a portrait of the real Ralegh, do you think, or an invention, or both?

Garrett: It has to be a little of both and it has to be somewhat distorted. Even unintentionally distorted. Things are in there because I remembered them at a particular time. Right? In other words, it partakes of the peculiar urgency of memory.

Bell: You never cheated at all?

Madison Smartt Bell's most recent novel is The Year of Silence.

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Garrett: Basically not. It was like an open book exam, but you've got time as a factor. Insofar as the book has any singular living quality, it is the quality of being really remembered. Okay. It *is* really remembered, because I am straining my memory trying to recall what I read about Sir Walter Ralegh. The urgency of my memory gives it a certain kind of excitement it might not have had otherwise. On the other hand, the risk is that you will forget. And I frankly forgot some major events in Ralegh's life, some of which contradict or greatly modify positions I did take about it. I thought, "So what, let *them* worry about it. It would be cheating if I did." And I didn't mind the figure that emerged. It is quite true that he is a distorted figure and certain amounts of historical fact and detail about him seem to have been suppressed, forgotten. I don't know what real experts on Ralegh would think. There were a few notices that said, "Wonder why he didn't mention his 10-year obsession with so-and-so . . . " Either I had never heard of it or I had forgotten it. It was a slight cheat to have him remember as I am trying to remember. To put the whole story at the end of his life so he is allowed to forget aspects of his own career.

Bell: One of the things in both of the books is a sharp analysis of political behavior. What do you think, was their political life like ours?

Garrett: I think in many ways it was. It had more integrity in a certain way—you died for your positions. You don't die for them now, you just deny everything and run on the other ticket. I think you would shake a lot of guys out of American politics like rotten apples off a tree if they thought their lives were on the line.

Bell: There is a lot of detail, especially in *The Succession*, about ordinary people, rather than historical personalities. Do you think you ended up knowing what the basic life of the time was like?

Garrett: No, I'm not sure that I did. What one ends up with in a work of fiction of that kind, ideally, is a capacity to imagine living at that time with the elements which you have been given.

Bell: Living as yourself?

Garrett: This is about the most that you can figure. The deeper I got into it, the more alien it seemed. I never really got around that. I still think that is the main impact.

Bell: They weren't much like us, then.

Garrett: No. The more you knew about them the odder they appeared, by our standards. Then it gets really quite startling if you realize that it hasn't been all that long ago—human beings have changed that much in such a short time. They can't even perceive the world in the same way.

Bell: Does this sort of discovery cause you to believe in progress?

Garrett: No.

Bell: What about the progress of intellect and sensibility, evolution of that kind? Do you think it exists at all?

Garrett: I have my doubts. Are you thinking of whether people are more intelligent or knowledgeable? They know different things. I don't think they are any better. But I am thinking one of the characteristics of the 20th century is how often and how successfully we lie to ourselves.

Elizabeth I could forbid discussion of certain topics. Her succession was illegal to discuss in public, particularly during the last 10 years of her life, when it was a very important issue. Now, *we* are very proud of our complete freedom of discussion.

One of the great tragedies of a free society is when they use self-censorship to such an extent that they might as well have state censorship. There are any number of things that have become unthinkable to discuss. You would be instantly thrown out of the room.

Who can deny some technological progress? But the Elizabethans did at least weigh the consequences of the technological progress they had available to them. There are cases where they changed their mind about something they were going to do because of the dangers involved. Old people in America, who were here when the very first automobiles appeared, have said that if they had ever imagined the filth and the danger these damned machines would bring into their lives, they would have stamped them out then and there, and we would be running around on horses. Now that to us is unthinkable—that someone could stamp out technological progress—but of course the Elizabethans did.

Bell: In the light of everything you've been saying, what is the meaning of history anymore? What do you get from it, if it is not really progressive?

Garrett: If it is not progressive, it is not so much the meaning of it as the *value* of it that's in question. There are two sorts of possible notions about it. One of them would be that it is especially significant that things haven't changed that much; there is no particular movement in history—how people handled their problems in the past is much more relevant than we might have imagined. The other, though, is that it is like an undiscovered country, to be approached not as an inferior form of modern life but as a separate and distinct culture. When we approach the Elizabethans or the Romans or anybody else in the past, it should make the past very different for us, and much more pertinent. At least it changes the perspective for us so that we have different things to learn from it than how they were so stupid they couldn't invent television.

One of our assumptions about progress seems to be that each generation accumulates more knowledge than the past generation. That we are like giants—we are standing on the shoulders of the last generation like cheerleaders on top of a

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pyramid. The only problem with that is it seems that we forget as much at the other end as we are learning at this end. The sum total of knowledge does not increase, which is one of the things which makes it so difficult for us ever to have enough information to properly imagine the past.

Bell: Starting into the first novel, did you have particular influences? Did you see yourself in relation to the Agrarians or the Fugitives or Southern Renascence writers at all?

Garrett: Not really, but I had certainly read them—and had read an awful lot of William Faulkner. I was trying not to do something that sounded like everything they did, but inevitably some of my concerns were the same.

Bell: What about Faulkner as an influence?

Garrett: I went the opposite direction from some I know. Example: Reynolds Price says somewhere that he is almost completely unfamiliar with Faulkner. Very early he read one book or something and decided he didn't want to read any more because he just didn't want to be influenced. I did the opposite; I read it all. I think you have to do one or the other. I wanted to use the things he had taught us, but I didn't want to sound like him, to pick up the rhythms and the words and the tropes and devices. In the best sense, there are ways to use the influence and work better. That's what I wanted to do, and whether it was always successful or not I don't know.

As for the others I did indeed read a great many. Southern novelists interested me the most. Warren, Lytle. I liked Tate. Caroline Gordon. I was tremendously excited by reading the first things of Carson McCullers. I didn't know Flannery O'Connor until a little bit later, when I began to get stories turned down: "I like this story a lot and I would publish it, but it sounds too much like Flannery O'Connor." I had Flannery O'Connor mixed up with Flann O'Brien. Anybody named Flannery, I just thought it was some guy from Ireland. It bugged me because I hardly could have been influenced by somebody I never heard of and thought was an Irishman. So I was greatly pleased, years later, to find in her book of letters one that says: "Katherine Anne Porter came through town. We had lunch. She tells me I write a lot like George Garrett. Who is he? I hope he's no one terrible."

Bell: *The Finished Man* is a political novel, and I'm wondering how you'd compare Southern politics with the politics of Elizabethan England.

Garrett: In Southern politics failure didn't cost you your life either, but there weren't too many second chances. As late as the 40's and early 50's, you get aced in Southern politics and you are finished. Except, strangely enough, for Claude Pepper, who's the model for the senator in that novel. He was one of the leading Democratic senators, very likely would have been Vice President instead of Lyndon Johnson. Instead he got beaten out of the Senate by his own protegé. The book is modeled closely enough on the Pepper/Smathers race, and most of the papers down Southeast reviewed it with pictures of them and discussed it in that way. Anyway, Claude Pepper survived all of this. A few years went by and he found himself—he is now a major national figure again: Claude Pepper the congressman, now 80-some years old, leading the aged people of America. They don't even remember Claude Pepper the senator.

There is a story that goes with this. Susan and I both worked for Jack Kennedy, years and years ago. My job was to try to talk writers into voting for Kennedy. And I must tell you that I made endless phone calls, and many famous writers of my generation (I can remember their names, and I hope they're reading this interview) said, "Kennedy and Nixon, Kennedy and Nixon—two of a kind, I'm not voting!" Later, many of these same guys were very passionate about marching against the Vietnam War. But after they made that statement I didn't take their judgment about Vietnam or anything else very seriously. Their knowledge of politics was zero, and I am not progressively oriented enough to think that they acquired more knowledge as they went along.

Anyway, very shortly after Kennedy's election, I was invited to a Kennedy party and got introduced to one of his hotshot guys as somebody from Florida. This guy said, "Tell me how we can win over and get next to the Democrats in Florida. We didn't do well there in the election." Pepper had come into Congress that same election, so I told him, "Go talk to Claude Pepper. He's a winner." And the guy said, "I would like to talk to Claude Pepper but he's *embarrassingly New Frontier*." Now, that stunned me, because it suddenly dawned on me that their feeling about the voter was like my feeling about beautiful scornful women. Any woman that liked me, something was wrong with her. The Kennedy people constantly tried to win over people that didn't like them, and they had contempt for anybody who did.

Bell: There's an episode in that book where the judge provokes a public beating, and gets himself badly hurt, so he can turn it to political account when he finally gets out of the hospital. I have always wondered if there was any truth in that.

Garrett: There is a basis of reality in that, though it did not involve a public beating. My father and his law partner got up at the big Fourth of July picnic where speeches were being made and said that the two of them would defend free of charge anybody who resisted the Klan in any way. Kill them, whatever. And then they very shortly had cases and so on. They did in fact run the Klan out of Central Florida, and they were in great danger of being killed. It's a showboat way to take on the enemy, to really hit them right out there in the open. The Elizabethans have that sort of thing in common with the Southerners. Something might have happened, but if it didn't happen right then, they were safe, as the only people who could possibly kill them were Klan people. It sort of was a shield of protection to do it so publicly. By doing it quietly they might easily have been burnt out or killed.

Bell: In the first couple of novels, did you feel like you needed to work for the market at all?

Garrett: I didn't know what the market was. I wanted *The Finished Man* to be kind of a straight novel. I wanted to learn how to do one. The way it got published at all in America was because the English had already accepted it. Scribner's had rejected that novel. When they looked at the first hundred pages they said I didn't understand what a novel was like. I did nice short stories, but I had to understand that a novel had a beginning, a middle, and an end to it, and my story as outlined didn't.

When Eyre and Spottiswoode took the book, then

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Scribner's wanted it also, and I added one thing to their manuscript that wasn't in Spottiswoode's. It took about five minutes. Three pages of manuscript—you'll see it in the book, if you open it up: Roman numeral I, *beginning* (and a little epigraph); about midway through, II, *middle*; and in front of the last 20 pages, III, *end*. When they accepted it they said that I certainly had improved it a whole hell of a lot and had profited from their criticism. But rejection is my middle name—we could clutter up this whole interview with rejection stories.

Bell: It seems to me that in your third novel, *Do, Lord, Remember Me*, the oral quality becomes much stronger. In structure it looks forward to the historical novels more than the others do. Any reason for that?

Garrett: One difference from the earlier books was that some of the pressures on me to write more conventionally did not exist. With *Do, Lord, Remember Me* I had no desire to make it simple. I had a job. Therefore I was liberated to try stuff I wanted to do. The version that was printed represented half of that book. Fifty percent of it was cut out. I was under contract to Little, Brown, and I sent in this novel and didn't hear from them for a long time. And back it came two days before Christmas, 1963, with a very short letter that said, "Goodbye, we don't need this. We find this novel to be *scabrous and orotund*." I will never forget the term, "scabrous and orotund." I had to go get a dictionary to find out if that was good or not. That was Alan D. Williams, and at some point he said, "Don't give up. Some day you will make a dent in the American consciousness." Ever since then I have seen it as a fender, this huge fender, the American consciousness.

Bell: What is the first thing you began to write, poetry or fiction?

Garrett: Poems. Back in the early 40's, high school and college. My first exposure was reading out loud to an audience, and I did that for quite a little while before getting anything published. That was always the primary basis of everything—the oral. And that makes for a different kind of poem, in a way.

Early on, in some kind of collegiate contest, Marianne Moore was one of the judges, and she got to be a friend. That was in her reclusive stage. She was asked to introduce a younger poet that she liked the work of at the Museum of Modern Art, and since she didn't know anybody else, she introduced me. In those days, I thought that was perfectly natural: of course I would be taken to the Museum of Modern Art and introduced by Marianne Moore. I went on the fumes of that a long time. It was much later, four or five years, that I ever thought about publishing anything.

The prevailing mode of the time was the poem as finished object, more like a piece of sculpture—you walk around it. The poems that I was trying to write were meant to give the impression (it's equally artificial) of spontaneously happening now. The poem is making itself up even as you are doing it. The two presuppositions are utterly different, in what you are aiming for. And you can miss very badly; with the wrong cut or shift of tone, you can blow the whole poem.

The characteristic poetry of the period was poetry built around the line as unit. And in the poem I'm talking about, the poem that's working itself out, to have a finished line would go completely against the grain of what you are pretending is happening. So nothing falls into place until you get to the end. The lines tend to tumble and tend to be unfinished.

Bell: Was there any reason for your shifting from a high style to a comparatively colloquial voice in the verse?

Garrett: Looking back now, the clearest line that I can see has to do with the relationship of the prose and the poetry. That is, when I was writing short stories or quasi-realistic novels about the Army and politics and stuff, I was writing rather formal, old-fashioned sorts of verse. When I started working on these long novels, working with a language which, while I hope it isn't stilted, is certainly removed from colloquial day-to-day English, the verse got loose. To satisfy my own need to be in touch with my own language at the time that I am living, I wrote more and more what you might call casual and colloquial verse. It also happened to be, unfortunately, opposite from what anyone else was doing at any given time. I have never been in sync (I would gladly be in sync if I could) with whatever movements were going on.

Bell: What do you think of these movements and things?

Garrett: What's bad about it is that each group pretends that none of the others exist. The performers and careerists at the moment seem to have closed their minds to everything except what they are doing—money-changers in the temple.

Bell: Why is that?

Garrett: Well, there's one practical fact: it is worthwhile now for the first time in the 20th century to be a careerist in poetry, because there are a few rewards, for the few, which are significant. Teaching jobs and grants and prizes and so forth. Until this present generation of poets, poetry had not been anything but a means toward downward mobility. There wasn't anything in it for anybody.

Still, there aren't enough jobs or grants to take care of *all* the poets. So there is a temptation to belong to a group which has some power and prestige and is able to reward you. And there is a temptation to close one's eyes to anything outside of that. I do know, for example, that it makes my friend and esteemed colleague Charles Wright extremely nervous to hear or talk about poets he doesn't know. He doesn't want to hear that there are unknown poets in Texas right now. I remember Jim Dickey categorically asserting that there couldn't be life in outer space, but what he had in mind was that he didn't want there to be any *poets* out there. Right now, writing stuff he didn't know about. It's sort of like a small trough with a lot of pigs trying to get up there, and it makes these people nervous, it takes their concentration away, to have in the back of their minds that right this minute, at desks all over America, poets they never heard of are writing in styles they don't know how to use. That's enough to really throw the old writer's block on a lot of people.

Now the next aspect of this, which is much more serious than pure careerism, is that it is either you make it or it's back to the old cotton field or assembly line for a lot of these guys. So I have known a lot of young poets coming out of Iowa or somewhere who very patiently wait their turn because if they don't they're going to be out in left field, somewhere that *no one* is looking at them. You get in a

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hierarchical club like the Iowa or Breadloaf circuit, and even if you are not one of their stars, if you stay patiently and do what we used to call "pull wool" down South sufficiently, your time will come. They can't leave you unrewarded forever. Queen Elizabeth could, but the Iowa Writers' Workshop can't.

Bell: You've taught at a lot of different schools, and there must be hundreds of publishing writers who've had you as a teacher at one time or another. Do you think writing can be taught?

Garrett: Well, you can't teach anybody to be a writer. I never had somebody saying, "Make me a writer." I have had close to it, one guy who said, "I will do anything to be one." All you had to do was tell him to do something once and he would do it, and this was a horrendous responsibility, because he didn't resist. Other than that I have mostly had people who needed response, needed direction or something to come up against, but who were not to be *made* into writers. You can teach certain kinds of techniques, the way that people teach the violin and the cello.

My approach to this is rather like that of my late uncle Jack, the golf pro, who was supposed to be one of the great golf teachers. He was one of the first guys in the history of golf to get holistic about it. He didn't know the word, but he suddenly realized that all this discussion—"this is the grip, and this is the stance"—was working against the experience of hitting the golf ball. So instead he took people out with buckets and buckets of balls and just had them start hitting that ball. He wouldn't give them much advice at all because what he was trying to find out was what their natural body inclinations were. Basically, all you are then is a critic, you are not imposing a system.

I picked up a class right after a very arbitrary, directional teacher had left, who had told them, "The following things are in a short story and should be in your short story. And I will not read stories on the following subjects. . . . " We worked as kind of a nice one-two team: when I came in I said, "Anything is a short story, let's see what you got." And then worked in terms of what they did. And that is my whole method, such as it is. So you don't end up saying that you taught anybody. You responded to somebody—they taught themselves. And for writers, maybe that's the best way.

Bell: What are you up to now, or will you discuss it?

Garrett: Not too much. One more historical book which is a short (I hope), spare book concerning the murder of Christopher Marlowe.

Bell: *The Succession* was supposed to be short too, right?

Garrett: Right. There's no way I can do something like that again—I'd be dead. So this one *has* to be short. We're beginning to think trilogy now, right? This one is going to be different, to the extent that I'm going to be without my greatest prop. It's so spare in planning that there's going to be minimal detail about the texture of Elizabethan life. Almost just the people and just the action. So it has to sort of exist in the context of the other two books. It's kind of the underside, which we dipped into a little bit in *The Succession*, but it gets farther down into it. There aren't any great folks, except in distance, hated by these minor malcontents and murderous bastards. It's the only time we're really doing the underside without the immediate contrast of the rulers and managers of the nation. My original supposition was, "What if Raymond Chandler wrote about the murder of Christopher Marlowe?" Well, it isn't going to be quite like that.

Bell: Looking over the record, your career has seemed to run in cycles of publication and recognition. Several books a year at the beginning, and you won the Prix de Rome. Then nearly a decade without much happening. Then *Death of the Fox* makes the best-seller list. Another decade of virtual silence, and now you've got four or five new books out, with *The Succession*, maybe, in the lead. The wheel of fortune has made a couple of complete revolutions in your case, it would seem. What do you think of the literary life?

Garrett: It's a mug's game, as Eliot called it. That part, that's not very satisfactory. Why I thought it would be immune from the general scriptural description of life on this earth I don't know. I imagined that by writing I would somehow be immune from the normal code of things, which leads inevitably to a contempt for the mundane. So the literary life is, of course, rich with disappointments. It's disappointing that I allow myself to be disappointed.

It's taken me a long time to figure this out, and other people have known it all along in a slightly different way, but it's what my wife, Susan, says: Public life does not exist. Only private life is real. Public life of any kind is an illusion. I'm not sure that's true. . . .

Bell: Ralegh might not have agreed with that.

Garrett: No, I think not either. Except, when he came out of the courtroom the day before he died, having been sentenced to death again in Westminster, a cousin of his saw that he was being very witty with a lot of the people, with jokes and bursts of laughter. The cousin said it was very unseemly for a guy just condemned to death to be cracking jokes, and Ralegh, punning at the time, said, "Indulge me a little, I shall be grave enough at the sad parting."

Lack of recognition *does* affect what you do. And you find yourself desiring trashy things. The hideous irony is that you box yourself in a position where if you get what you've been waiting for, it turns out to be a nice platter of trash.

Faulkner has been a great inspiration to me, an influence in the sense that he managed to succeed in doing his work while being bitterly unhappy, and it's quite clear that he was, over not getting any kind of recognition. My favorite example is from the unpublished introduction to *The Sound and the Fury*. He had enormous difficulty with his third novel, that was ultimately published as *Sartoris*, getting it published anywhere. So he had this tremendous disappointment, because things had been real easy up to that point. And he says he was liberated to write *The Sound and the Fury* by having this thing happen to him. He said, "One day I seemed to close a door on all agents, publishers, book lists, and everything else, and said to myself—now I can write." It's the reverse of doors being closed in your face. *You* close the door.

Bell: Did you ever wish you had not done this, and instead had made your career as a Marine fighter pilot or something of the sort?

Garrett: I really liked certain aspects of the army life, and I thought for a while that I might just do that. I was a master sergeant at the end of it. I looked around, and there were some master sergeants that had a pleasant life. But I'd

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probably be very dead by this time. I didn't know the Vietnam War was coming.

Bell: With all the irritations and frustrations that come with being a full-time professional writer, do you still think it's worth it?

Garrett: Nobody chooses. There's a poem by David Slavitt, "The Calf and the Ox," based on a fable of Avianus, where a frisky little calf is standing by the fence and laughing at this big dumb ox, yoked and pulling a big heavy plough. In his cheerful amusement the calf doesn't see "the farmer who carries a glittering butcher knife / and a light halter, coming toward the calf." And then the last line of the poem, the old-fashioned moral, is, "Nobody gets to choose which yoke to wear." And I know that's true.

Your major choices, such as they are, are always made without any real knowledge of where they may lead, and you tell yourself that, as in "The Road Not Taken." He's going to say, as he does in the poem, "I took the one less travelled by, / and that has made all the difference." But he makes it quite clear that he didn't know whether it was less travelled or not, so he was not capable of making that conclusion. What I would choose, knowing what I know now, would still be chosen in ignorance and would probably turn out to be equally disappointing. So it seems to me a great relief that nobody gets to choose which yoke to wear.

FORTY-NINERS: MARX, ENGELS, AND HARROD'S *by George Watson*

The other day, in London, I had a vision on a moving staircase in Harrod's.

Harrod's is a department store in the British capital much loved by local duchesses and well-heeled visiting Americans—a sort of consumer-heaven with chic, from its delicatessen to its china and its sumptuous furnishings. It is less noted for its mystical experiences, which is why I trouble to report the matter. But when a manager—a refined and dignified presence—stepped onto the escalator beside me, I ventured to ask him when his store was founded. "In 1849," he replied. Whence my vision: For 1849, as I knew, was the year Karl Marx left his native Germany for London, where he was to spend the rest of his life. And I suddenly saw the whole history of Britain for the past century and more as a struggle between those two opposing spirits—Harrod's and Marx—with Harrod's winning.

The triumph of consumerism has been clear for a long time. It was already clear when the centenary of Marx's death passed off so unassumingly in 1983, with a modest rite organized at his grave in north London by the dwindling British Communist Party, which lost its last seat in the House of Commons as long ago as 1950. (It still has one in the House of Lords.) It was clear before the Labour Party left office in 1979, in the first of three election defeats; clear even before Clement Attlee lost the premiership to Winston Churchill in 1951. Marx believed that Britain would be the first socialist state on earth, being the first industrial nation: that was among the reasons why he settled there. It is far too late for the British to be that. But the argument by now has gone much further, and a good many people—including a good many in the Labour Party—wonder if it will ever be socialist at all. In fact Labour is now busy rewriting its program (after its third electoral defeat in June 1987) to come to terms with a nation where one fifth are said to own shares and nearly two thirds their own homes. In September 1987, Nigel Lawson, Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced that with the privatization of British Petroleum there would be more shareholders than television sets in Britain; while the privatization of steel, water, and electricity is still to come.

This is a large change: large even in the memory of the living. Less than half a century ago Joseph Schumpeter, no

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friend to socialism, declared in his *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1943) that free enterprise could not survive in the West, adding that his verdict was "in itself completely uninteresting," being widely held among experts: many who hated the prospect of things to come still saw the death of capitalism as utterly inevitable. George Orwell, shortly before, had remarked that nobody believed in capitalism now except a few old gentlemen in expensive clubs. It would have been a rare prophet on either side of the Atlantic, in the last years of World War II, who would have predicted popular shareholding 40 years on, or majority home-owning, or the rapid retreat of the state.

But by now all that is simply taken for granted, and you do not have to be a liberal or a conservative to believe in it. In 1987 a Labour government in New Zealand announced its own privatization program—as if anxious to prove to the world that the craze for individual ownership could be satisfied even by parties calling themselves socialist (it even engaged a former Conservative parliamentary candidate from Britain to organize it). Meanwhile China and India, which between them comprise nearly half the human race, are actively promoting the private sector; and even the Soviet empire is said to be stirring, at least economically, from its long statist sleep.

Marx believed that Britain would be the first socialist state on earth, being the first industrial nation: that was among the reasons why he settled here.

Why is this? The likeliest answer may lie outside argument altogether, in the evidence of one's eyes and ears. Competition gives people what they want—especially poor people. Any old woman trying to live on a tiny pension knows—when she takes her supermarket wire-basket in hand—that the bargains are to be found in commodities where competition is keenest, and that monopoly—whether state or private—favors the rich. Why else would she travel by competitive private buses rather than by state-owned, monopolistic British Rail? She can know all that without ever having heard words like *monopoly* or *competition*, or being aware of what they mean. Competition favors the poor, and you do not need a conceptual intelligence to notice it. In fact, conceptual intelligence can be rather good at thinking of reasons for not noticing it. If socialism is naturally and inevitably monopolistic, then socialism favors the rich. That, some will object, is a big If. But there is no reasonable doubt that socialism has been heavily disposed to favor monopoly since its earliest days in the 1840's, and in the late Victorian heyday of the Fabian Society; no doubt that socialist governments have created vast monopolies wherever, east or west, they have gained power; no doubt that, as in Britain today, they have implacably resisted any shift towards competition—whether by way of privatization or anything else. That is what makes the New Zealand instance so astounding. The identification of socialism with monopoly is well supported by theory and practice alike, at least till yesterday, and socialists only have themselves to blame if it is widely accepted. No wonder, then, if the notion that socialism favors the rich has long since ceased to look like an intellectual paradox. It is what every man and woman knows. (At least we all behave, wire-basket in hand, as if we know it.)

The deeper causes why socialism proved right-wing are now widely and deeply explored. One reason is that, utopian though socialism was, it never looked far enough in its revolutionary aims. Ten years ago Sir Henry Phelps Brown, professor at the London School of Economics, remarked in *The Inequality of Pay* (1977) that Marx and his followers were always narrow-mindedly concerned with inequalities of capital ownership rather than of pay. They cared enormously about who owned the land, the mines, and the factories. It was nothing to them—east of the Iron Curtain today it is still nothing to them—that socialism allows, even guarantees, vast inequalities of income and privilege. "The inequalities that mattered," wrote Phelps Brown of the Marxists,

> were those that arose out of the division of the national product between land and capital, on the one hand, and labour on the other. Inequalities between one worker and the other escaped attention.

That principle of socialist inequality, as he noticed, is followed in the Soviet Union to this day, where top managers are paid 20 times as much as the lowest-paid worker. (In Soviet universities the disparity of pay between the highest and the lowest—between the president and the porter—is said to be nearly 20 times as great as in capitalist Britain.) Given a one-party state, freedom from elections and a judicial system that enforces obedience to a ruling elite, socialism is by now the world's great guarantor of privilege—rather like the Bourbon monarchy before the French Revolution. Most West Europeans, like most Americans, hear enough news from eastern Europe and China to know that is true. Inhabitants of eastern Europe do not doubt it for a moment. Socialist privilege is highly overt, after all, much as it was in the France of Louis XIV. A friend returning from Mao's China once told me that high party officials could be recognized by curtains on the backseats of their chauffeur-driven cars and the deference with which they were treated in public places. A high official, for example, in Maoist China did not stand in line when booking into a hotel: he was led to the front. Another aspect of the essential conservatism of socialism, both economic and social, lies in the fact that it abolishes the threat to big capital from small capital.

The small capitalist is the biggest threat to big capital there is, and the biggest there could ever be. Socialism is hardly a threat at all. One monopolist, after all, has little to fear from another. That is especially true if a monopoly is not required to make profits. British gas and electricity, for example—both public monopolies since the Labour government of 1945-51—are now being privatized: that will only help the ordinary man if these utilities compete more eagerly to give the consumer what he wants; and they will compete all the more eagerly if their new shareholders and managers insist on profits. What is more, if small competitors grow up to challenge the big energy-suppliers, the consumer—and everyone consumes energy, even the poorest—will benefit from them. Privatization, then, favors

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the poor—but not every sort of privatization. That is a lesson the British Labour Party, unlike its counterpart in New Zealand, is still reluctant to heed. But in 1987, after its third election defeat, it opened a campaign called "Labour listens." (And if it really listens, it is certain to be told that competition is what ordinary people want. It will be interesting to see what, if anything, Labour does about it.)

The rich, many now realize, have little to fear from socialism, as the Soviet system shows, and might even benefit from it. The poor have everything to lose. The claims of competition to be socially radical run deeper and wider—it is now clear—than socialists in the past century and a half ever understood. Literature has a part to play here; I am delighted as a literary historian to report that 1849, besides Harrod's and Marx's, was the year of Dickens' *David Copperfield*, which might have been subtitled "History of a Yuppie," had Dickens known the word. Competition and the romantic spirit are deeply allied. There is an "autonomous, self-illusory hedonism" at the heart of modern consumerism, as another British analyst, Colin Campbell, has recently suggested in *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism*—English romanticism of the late 18th century and after, matching the industrial revolution that began simultaneously in England in the 1760's. That is a profound historical perception linking industry and the arts—though I do not know what is self-illusory about pleasure-seeking, or hedonism, and suspect that those who strive to distinguish between being happy and merely imagining it are trying to drive a wedge through a gap that is not there. There is nothing illusory about the joys of fine porcelain or fresh bed linen, even if they do not last. But the pursuit of happiness—even its fulfillment—as an individual quest is now so deep-rooted in the way we live—in a thousand stores humbler than Harrod's, in a million supermarkets in the Western industrial world, in the exotic restaurants in our cities that lavish ethnic choices on tired palates—that it is unsurprising if no free people has ever actually voted for socialism. (No, not even Britain in 1945: Labour only polled 48 percent.) It looks as if Lenin was right, in his candid little pamphlet *What Is to Be Done?* when he told the world at large and the Bolsheviks in particular that the workers would never choose socialism for themselves: it would have to be forced upon them or it would not happen at all.

But something else happened in 1849, far less well known than Marx's emigration to London or the founding of Harrod's. It was an article by Friedrich Engels.

In January-February, in the same momentous year, Engels contributed an article called "The Hungarian Struggle" to Marx's journal *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. It has been reprinted several times in this century, notably in the East Berlin collected edition of the writings of Marx and Engels (which establishes its party orthodoxy), but I have never met a Marxist who was aware of it. It announced that racial extermination was essential to socialism.

Engels' arguments in 1849 have nothing to do with eugenics, which entered only later into socialist thought. Socialism requires genocide, he believed, because advanced capitalist societies embrace backward communities that have not yet abandoned feudalism: Scottish Highlanders, Bretons and Basques, for instance—not to mention Yugoslavs, as they are now known, who to the dismay of German socialists were encouraging the Russian advance into Europe. As a German, Engels was clear that such communities were "racial trash," and he saw no future for them after the Revolution but extinction:

> Until its complete extermination or loss of national status, this racial trash always becomes the most fanatical bearer there is of counter-revolution, and remains that. Its entire existence is nothing more than a protest against a great historical revolution.

In the days when he was busy reading revolutionary literature, in pre-1914 Munich, the young Hitler could easily have read that genocidal essay in a 1902 collection called *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Marx, Engels und Lassalle*, edited by Franz Mehring. It figures in no recent anthology of socialist scripture, however, and it has been efficiently forgotten.

It was not forgotten by socialists before Hitler's accession to power in 1933. Stalin alluded to the 1849 article in his 1924 *The Foundations of Leninism* with approval. Lenin, in his six or seven years of power, had already established the first concentration camps in European history, and they were officially so described in the Soviet media. H.G. Wells, writing in 1902 as an English socialist at the beginning of the century, had already called for the extermination of incurables and inferior races in his *Anticipations* as a necessary consequence of socialism: "They will have to go." And Bernard Shaw, a passionate admirer (unlike Wells) of the Soviet system, had called for extermination in his 1933 play, *On the Rocks*, which was promptly translated into German.

Shaw's English preface to *On the Rocks* is as neglected as Engels' genocidal article of 1849. Like Wells, he is openly contemptuous of the sanctity of human life, which he sees as founded on the exploded notion that human beings have souls; and he is as certain as Wells that extermination can be humanely, even painlessly, effected. As he puts it at the beginning of his 1933 preface, it "must be put on a scientific basis if it is ever to be carried out humanely and apologetically as well as thoroughly." The mass-murderer must now murmur "Sorry."

Shaw's 1933 argument is lengthy and elaborate. Some human beings, to begin with, are simply dangerous in themselves, being criminals, and the political necessity for killing them is "precisely like that of the cobra or the tiger." But that, though it "disposes of the dogma of the unconditional sacredness of human life," is only a beginning: "only a corner of the field opened up by modern powers of extermination." The socialist must be clear what, in his program of purification, he is about. The extermination of Jews is impractical, Shaw writes in 1933, since interbreeding has long since destroyed the means by which Jews can be distinguished from Gentiles. "The exemption of the Jew as such figured for a few mad moments in the program of the Nazi party." Still, it is helpful of Hitler to have put extermination where it belongs, he argues, on the agenda of history: at least we now have a government in Europe that sees how necessary it is. There is even better news from the Soviet Union, he continues, where "the extermination of the peasant is in active progress," meaning no doubt the

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starvation of the Ukraine. That of "ladies and gentlemen of so-called independent means" is already almost complete, 16 years after the October Revolution; and Shaw fantasizes happily about exterminations already under official consideration in Britain and the United States. He calls urgently for the killing of incurables, which is where Hitler's program was to begin six years later, and goes on to praise the work and purpose of the Cheka and OGPU in Stalin's Russia:

> Are you pulling your weight in the social boat? are you giving more trouble than you are worth? have you earned the privilege of living in a civilized community? That is why the Russians were forced to set up the Inquisition or Star Chamber, called at first the Cheka and now the Gay Pay Oo (OGPU) to go into these questions and "liquidate" persons who could not answer them satisfactorily

. . . the security against abuse being that "the Cheka had no interest in liquidating anybody who could be made publicly useful, all its interests being in the opposite direction." So Shaw believed that indolence should be a capital offense. Rightly considered, in fact, liquidation by the OGPU is not punishment at all—as the victims and its relatives should try to understand: it is merely "weeding the garden."

At about the time Shaw was penning these prefatorial words, Hitler was remarking to a friend and colleague, Hermann Rauschning: "I have learnt a great deal from Marxism, as I do not hesitate to admit." In fact, as he went on in *Hitler Speaks* (1939), "the whole of National Socialism is based on it." Years later, in 1972, Ulrike Meinhof of the West German "Red Army Faction" announced a similar point from the dock at her judicial hearing:

> How was Auschwitz possible, what was anti-semitism? People should have explained all that, instead of accepting Auschwitz collectively as an expression of evil. The worst of it is that we are all agreed about it, Communists included.

In fact, as she had come to realize in her days as a Marxist guerrilla-fighter, anti-Semitism was essentially virtuous, being anticapitalist. Auschwitz, she told the court,

> meant that six million Jews were killed and thrown on the waste-heap of Europe for what they were: money-Jews. Finance-capital and banks, the hard core of the system of imperialism and capitalism, had turned the hatred of men against money and exploitation—and against the Jews. The failure of the Left—of the Communists—had lain in not making these connections plain.

Several years ago, in *The Idea of Liberalism* (1985), I summarized the evidence of Hitler's debt to socialist doctrines of genocide in a chapter there called "Hitler's Marxism." I was told then—and should have believed it—that modern socialists would offer no argument in the matter: least of all Marxists, whose knowledge of the writings of Marx and Engels is studiously limited. That prophecy has proved correct. Tell a Marxist that Marx and Engels publicly advocated genocide, and he will look blank and change the subject. But the struggle, it is good to report, has now reawakened in Germany, where it began in 1849. It is known as the Battle of the Historians—and it promises to rage for no little time, not least in the columns of that lively London monthly *Encounter*. Ernst Nolte of the Free University in West Berlin challenged a Harvard audience some years ago, after quoting Hitler's exterminatory program: "Where have we seen this before?"; and to cries of unbelief he answered his own question: "In the writings of Karl Marx." Marx's own *Ethnological Notebooks* have just been published in Holland for the first time, in 1972; and Marx's own racism, it is to be expected, will become more and more widely known—not to mention Stalin's applause, and Hitler's, for Marx's dogma of genocidal terror. But the neo-Marxist principle of self-defense through silence still prevails. If a text is inconvenient, do not read it. If it is proclaimed by dictators, forget it. And if dictators act on it, pretend they must have had something else in mind.

Meanwhile the Battle of the Historians, like the escalators at Harrod's, rolls on, and what began in 1849 is moving onwards still. The history of England since that year could be written in terms of that struggle—hedonistic consumerism versus the intellectual dream of a mankind purified of selfish ambition and the racial defilement of tainted blood. No need to ask which of the two contenders has won in England, or which will go on winning. This is a nation eternally dedicated to the creative delights of rational pleasure. Long may that dedication last. But as for the world beyond, that is anybody's guess.

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles*:

Masculine

Feminine

Neuter

"But when you get one old political prisoner alone with another, they exchange tales of a quite different nature, of nervous exhaustion, uncontrollable sobbing in solitude, the wages of fear, and the feelings of inadequacy, of guilt. It doesn't do to discuss these matters with strangers; they put you down as some kind of wacko."

—from "Learning Goodness"
by Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale

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BRIBEMASTERS *by Michael Warder*

"The devil's boots don't creak."
—Scottish proverb

Many who take money from him, attend his conferences, or publish their articles in his publications will point to his anti-Communism. Others support the civil liberty issues he seems to embody. Some reassure themselves by seeing the influential people with whom he travels. A few employ the rationale of the lesser evil: the powers that be are so malevolent that collaboration with him to obtain resources for a worthy project is justifiable. Still, the clergymen, scholars, policy analysts, journalists, and the hosts of others who have been taking large amounts of money from him might do well to consider Sun Myung Moon's purpose, beliefs, and methods.

From the *Divine Principle*—Moon's statement of theology that he and his followers regard as the Complete Testament (after the Old and the New Testament)—we read that the ideal form of government is "theocratic socialism." This is a rule of saints who will gather around the Second Coming of Christ to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. Christ, as the visible expression of God, will be analogous to the brain and the saints to the nerves in this ideal body politic.

The Messiah will, in accordance with God's Providence of Restoration, have been born in the chosen nation of Korea between the years 1917 and 1930. Moon, of course, was born in Korea in 1920. In addition to these and many other hints in the *Divine Principle*, in his talks and by his actions in various church ceremonies and administration, Moon leaves absolutely no doubt about his Messianic claim, although making such a claim in public would be terribly bad form.

When will the Kingdom come? At one point Moon taught it would come in 1960; later it was pushed back to 1981 and then 1984. The Kingdom keeps being pushed back because the followers aren't measuring up to the required standards of faith and deeds and the level of sacrifice needed for its establishment and success. Then there is the further problem of Christians and America not heeding the call. The diaspora and the Holocaust, according to Moon, stem from the refusal of the chosen nation of Israel to accept Jesus Christ. If America and Christians do not respond to Moon, they can look forward to a fate much worse than the Jews.

Few Americans—whether they are anti-Communists or aging civil rights leaders—pay much attention to Moon's theology. Some believe it is simply a sham to gain Moon wealth and power. Others find his ideas so unusual that they are dismissed out of hand as syncretistic and harmless heresy. Yet the movement devotes enormous resources to the spread of the ideology in lectures, books, videotapes, and audiotapes. Members spend much time memorizing these ideas, lecturing them, and finding corroborating evidence. It would be a mistake to disregard Moon's theology as unimportant, since it is a major component of the movement. As to wealth and power, Moon makes no apology for his effort to gather these. You need all the wealth and power in the world if you are lord of the universe and your mission is to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. People who come into contact with the Moon movement often sense there is a hidden agenda behind the immediate cause for relating to a member of the movement, but they can't quite put their finger on it. Outsiders are treated like honored guests in the hope that they will convert and bring their friends along. If famous professor Y participates in a publication or conference but shows little interest in joining the inner core, perhaps he will lead to professor X, who will. Outsiders who participate in Moon front groups perform a number of functions: They prevent the inner core from being isolated from the greater society; they provide legitimacy to Moon and his movement to other outsiders; they reinforce the members' and potential members' faith in Moon; and they provide a continual supply of potential inner members. The outsiders also contribute their specific expertise to Moon organizations which shadow all the organizations of normal society in such diverse areas as: religion, education, business, media, politics, and the performing arts. These front groups serve as training grounds and perhaps the actual institutions which one day will replace their extant Satanic counterparts on the road to the Kingdom.

There are literally hundreds of these organizations, which all reinforce one another, with key Moon operatives sitting on their boards. For example, the *Washington Times*, the *New York City Tribune*, and the magazine *Insight* are owned by News World Communications, which, in turn, is owned by One-Up Enterprises, which is owned by the ultimate holding corporation, Unification Church International. When leaders of the *Washington Times* say the newspaper is separate from the "church" and is funded by businesses of church members, there is a grain of truth to it because the paper is a business, as are News World Communications and One-Up Enterprises. For its part, Unification Church International has only Koreans on its board, with Mrs. Moon as its nominal chairman. Despite the name, UCI does not function as a church. It is more of an international clearinghouse for many of the movement's activities, including the businesses. Although Moon's name might not appear on the flow charts of this organizational scheme to protect him, he is the acknowledged founder of some of these organizations. In an operative sense, Moon owns all of these enterprises because no major decisions about personnel or money are made without his personal approval.

This brief outline in no way does justice to the countless organizations Moon has begun. Still, some of the businesses

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aren't in this structure, nor are the businesses based in Korea, Japan, Europe, and countries all over the world. There are also organizations which do not relate to business, such as the International Cultural Foundation. The ICF is an American-based tax-exempt educational and charitable organization whose board members are church leaders from all over the world, with Moon as chairman. Each year ICF sponsors the International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences, a multidisciplinary gathering which discusses science and values. The ICF receives its money from the Unification Church of America—a U.S.-based religious organization that really does function as a church in America. The Professors World Peace Academy is a program of ICF, but organizations of the PWPA preexisted the ICF in both Korea and Japan.

While a thorough knowledge of the corporate structures and accounting may be necessary, it is not sufficient to understand how the Moon movement functions. The real lines of authority and accountability begin with Moon and extend outward with trusted Koreans, Japanese, and the national leaders from the various countries. The organizations are simply convenient fronts to relate to the broader society. Expertise within the movement and by outsiders is used and may carry some weight, but in Moon's kingdom spiritual authority derives from loyalty, length of service, and level of sacrifice. Moon extends his authority through the faithful, and his favor may blow hot or cold depending on circumstances. Organizational charts are secondary.

The international dynamic of the front groups is rarely perceived. If the *Washington Times* is influential in Washington, it's difficult to imagine its impact in Seoul, where national security and connections in America's capitol are the beginning and the end of power. Hundreds of copies of the *Washington Times* are flown regularly to Korea for distribution throughout the government leadership there.

It would be difficult to shut Moon down in Korea considering his bases and contacts in Japan, America, Europe, and the rest of the world. Nonetheless, from time to time the Korean government has jailed members of his movement and made the export of ginseng tea and other products Moon deals in difficult. To counteract such pressures, Moon has attempted in every way to make his movement indispensable. His machine tool business, Tong-Il Enterprises, fulfills major government contracts for the production of weapons parts that include rifles as well as more sophisticated weapons systems. While Koreans are impressed with Moon's contacts in Washington, visitors to Korea may be similarly impressed with Moon's operations. Beneath the surface, the realities, of course, are very different. The big names around Moon's front groups in America and Korea care little for Moon's ultimate claims. In fact, Koreans treat Moon about the same as Americans: most think he is a dangerous charlatan even as they take what benefits he has to offer them.

Peeling back the many layers of the Moon movement, one encounters the core members, whose daily life is an experience most Americans would not be able to imagine or believe possible. Among others, Eileen Barker, Frederick Sontag, J. Lofland, and M. Galanter have studied the lives of members of the Unification Church with some care and from differing perspectives. According to their findings (and my own personal experience), members are generally better educated than the average person, but they are alienated and dissatisfied with their lives. They have rejected the more typical paths of education, career, or religion. They are searchers looking for answers to the basic questions of life: Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? The number of neurotics who join might be slightly above the average, but not much. Psychotics who walk into lectures or workshops are weeded out in the recruitment and early indoctrination process. Moon's ideas and projects provide a total answer and a plan of action for the spiritual quest and the acolytes' desire to create a utopia. For yet others, the initial personal appeal to join is an important factor.

For these inner members, obedience is the highest virtue, a means for the purification of one's soul. Members believe their spiritual leader is the incarnation of God who has revealed the highest level of spiritual truth. Who can question his orders? The workdays go 18 to 20 hours seven days a week. After an early morning (as early as 4:30 a.m. but no later than 6:00 a.m.) worship service, members go off on an often bewildering array of duties which includes selling products, recruiting people for lectures and weekend retreats ("witnessing"), or working for the numerous organizations mentioned above. Evenings are a time for door-to-door witnessing, lecturing, or fundraising. Late night prayer services are held, and then it's off to rest. But there is always some special prayer condition or a fast to insure that people are always making an extra special effort.

Life is simple for the full-time fundraisers (about 25 percent of the movement). After the worship service and organizational meeting, they go all day asking for money in exchange for flowers, candy, or some other cheap disposable item. A major hazard on the MFT's (Mobile Fundraising Teams), given the long days, is the possibility that the van driver will fall asleep at the wheel late at night while driving back to wherever it is the team is sleeping. The number of deaths, injuries, and near misses is not known, but for those on the MFT it is a nightly reason for prayerful concern, since they do occur with disturbing frequency. In the 1970's, auto insurance coverage was terminated based on accident experience.

There is no paycheck for full-time members. Nor is there medical, hospital, or life insurance or a pension plan. For those who are paid for working with outsiders in businesses which must conform with minimum wage and other laws, there are set procedures for the money to be turned over to the Church. Nonetheless, there are discrepancies between members who work in businesses employing outsiders and those who work internally, and these are a source of continual tension.

In church centers the food is cheap, with low amounts of protein. Rice, tasteless soups, and all manner of goulashes are a regular feature. For those who can't take another night of ersatz dinner, there is always peanut butter and jelly. For a change of pace, a member may splurge on a Big Mac, and those on the MFT's will often sustain themselves on fast food. Of course, for recruitment activities involving outsiders, the food is good and can even be lavish for VIP's.

Marriages are arranged by Moon, often between persons who have never seen each other and whom Moon sees for

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the first time in a large roomful of men and women on either side. International and interracial marriages are encouraged and involve thousands of persons. There is a strict requirement of celibacy before marriage. In 1970 Moon married 791 couples; in 1975 it was 1,800 couples; in 1982 there were 2,075 couples in Madison Square Garden and 5,800 couples later that year in Korea. While the wait for marriage can be many years, couples are not allowed to consummate it for periods ranging from two years to sometimes as long as seven years. Moon makes that most intimate of decisions for others, since fallen people lack the spiritual authority to marry in the first place.

The marriage ceremony is a kind of combination of the sacraments of baptism, holy communion, and holy orders. It is only possible because Moon and his wife have arrived on earth as a new Adam and Eve who, by their spiritual authority, may extend the dominion of God through the marriages. When the time to bear children arrives, church women are often older and not in good physical condition. (Abortion does not have the stigma in Moon's church that it does in the more orthodox Christian tradition. It is believed that the spirit enters the child when he breathes in his first breath of life.) Since child-rearing is a distraction from those long days of devoted service to build the Kingdom, the Church has established nurseries in which the children are placed after three months. Staff at the nurseries are assigned to as many as five infants who are raised listening to Korean language tapes. After three children, the wives may leave their church mission and rejoin their husbands, with scarcely any emotional or financial foundations for building a family.

The psychological scars on the children and family life itself are perhaps some of the most serious consequences of the movement. The parents are expected to be responsible for their families while remaining devoted to the cause. There are, of course, exceptions. Like totalitarian movements anywhere, the leadership is subsidized by the cadre and may get by without supporting their own families.

While some Church leaders have impressive clothes and cars, they may have little else. If they are in the upper echelons, have put in many years of loyal service, and have Moon's favor, he will make sure they are taken care of, but they have no money of their own. Indeed, there is the bizarre spectacle of the children of Korean members going to Ivy League universities while other Church members just starting out family life have to make do with inadequate diet and poor clothing. When the babies come, these couples face hospital and medical debt for lack of insurance, savings, or regular income. The assumption behind this approach is that Moon is the brain, the leadership, the nerves, while the members are only the responsive body. The members' duty is not to question but to give wholeheartedly in the belief that God will provide for their future.

Of course members cannot help but raise questions about this Unification way toward the Kingdom which seems to leave them so powerless. In ways strangely similar to racist American whites who believe in the inferiority of blacks, Orientals in the movement teach Western members that their Oriental culture is superior to the materialistic culture of the West, weakened by drugs, pornography, and moral decay. This condition of weakness and inferiority is explained by Moon's view of history which teaches that while Christian Europe was the center of God's providence, the Orient is the land of the new Christ and the new dispensation. Korea is a chosen nation, and Moon teaches that the Korean race is connected biologically to the lost Hebrew tribe of Dan. Moon is believed to be descended from the lineage of Abraham as well as Confucius. According to Moon, Koreans are culturally and racially superior to Caucasians, who in turn are superior to blacks. Each race has a uniqueness in God's plan, but there is a hierarchy. The Orientals are spiritual and wise, while Westerners are rational and scientific. Blacks, according to Moon, have rhythm, physical ability, and emotionality.

Since whites are too white and blacks too black, interracial marriages are seen as an especially good way to break down racial extremes. But prototypical couples of the same nationality or race can serve Moon's purpose too, as models for the rest of a given nation or race to follow. The Korean racial group is just right, and if the whole world were homogenized, the human race would, one is led to believe, resemble the Koreans.

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The consequences of these stereotypes are reflected in the hierarchy and administration of the movement. Koreans are topmost, Japanese second, Americans third, and Europeans fourth in rank, with Germans leading the continent. In planning activities and making personnel changes, these rankings are taken into consideration. Moon has targeted America for his activities because he believes it the most powerful country in the world, that can also serve as bridge between the Orient and Europe. In assigning missionaries, Europeans are responsible for Africa; North Americans for South America; while Japanese are responsible for Asia. Locals have some leadership responsibilities within proscribed limits but serve mostly for image purposes. Ultimate control resides with Moon and the Korean elders.

Needless to say, Moon's concepts of race are deeply buried. But the problems of the West, especially sexual immorality, materialism, and individualism, are continually contrasted with the virtue of the Oriental way—the closest to the way of heaven. Not much is said of the social problems of Korea or the weaknesses of Oriental culture. The social acceptability of *kisaeng* girls along with the inflexibility and provinciality of Korean society is never discussed. Of course the desires for wealth, status, and sexual satisfaction exist in Korea as well but are pursued according to slightly different rules. In addition, there is a repression of individual creativity there greater than anything we might experience in the West. The "Hermit Kingdom" of Korea is facing the problems of modernity like all Third World countries and has no special claim on virtue.

Within the Moon movement there is no foundation for the ideas of freedom, the rule of law, and the dignity of the

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individual as they are understood in the West. While Moon's theology borrows from Christianity, in an admittedly unusual manner, Moon's concepts of leadership and society are Confucian with a strong emphasis on social conformity and loyalty. Rational criticism or internal disagreement on methods causes the Korean leadership to lose face and is tantamount to sedition or revolution. As is true for much of the Orient, new ideas or criticism are better offered through back-door channels at a propitious moment. Nonetheless, Moon fully utilizes the advantages afforded by the First Amendment and the Western legal tradition when they protect his freedom to operate in America. Within the leadership of the movement these fundamental Western civic norms are seen as mere expedients to build a totally new culture and political system.

Conservatives and liberals who collaborate with Moon might do well to look more deeply at what he believes and the actual practices of his movement. Ronald Reagan and Walter Mondale have more in common with each other than with Moon. Anti-Communists should be repulsed by Moon's overt "theocratic socialism" with its model of the total state. Free enterprisers might consider Moon's position on the state, individual choice, private property, and legality. Traditional conservatives might well look into the messianic claim, the assertion of Korean cultural and racial superiority, as well as the movement's family practice. Moon's religious and political views are repugnant to conservatism, even if his totalist claim is anti-Communist.

Some say it is unfair to label Moon a totalitarian. After all, he does not torture or execute people. The members are not locked in Church jails. True enough. Nonetheless, Marx never jailed or executed anyone, and even Lenin and the Ayatollah began with ideas and organization. The question to be asked is, where are the ideas headed, and what is their goal? There is little question that Moon would have no ethical conflict with running a regime as absolutist as the Ayatollah Khomeini's. Moon believes, as do his followers, that his authority, purpose, and decisions are the will of God. Those of a different persuasion are of the devil. Moon's claims to authority make papal infallibility seem weak in comparison.

Liberals who identify with Moon's movement as a religious or racial minority might do well to probe the unpublicized assertion of racial superiority and the total failure of the movement to understand the dignity of the person, the due process of law, and the freedom of expression, in other than a cosmetic, public relations sense. Sacrificing human life for the will of God is ingrained in members from the first lectures, and Western ethical or legal *angst* is derided as symptomatic of a lack of clearly defined social purpose and definition.

Most people concerned with ideas like the financial support and publicity that traveling with Moon makes possible. The problem is that association with Moon legitimizes his theology and his messianic claim, both of which are odious to virtually all serious thinkers, not to mention the average citizen. If Americans who would be opinion leaders take Moon's money or the publicity for appearing in his publications, they undermine the ideas they purport to believe in. They, then, are the ones whose ideas are a sham.

SELLING HEIDEGGER SHORT *by Thomas Molnar*

In Martin Heidegger's existentialism, two centuries of German philosophy have culminated in an unexpected, almost scandalous way. Since Immanuel Kant, at least, this philosophy was bent on finding proofs that Being is unknowable, or that it is not God but the World Spirit, History, the Will to Power, the Proletariat, whatever. Heidegger went back to a tradition before Socrates, which means before discursive reason, and attached himself to Being. Not to this or that *to be* (*Seiende*), but to Being itself (*Sein*). Eliminated were Plato, whose Being, Heidegger maintains, is an *idea*, Aristotle, whose being is *energy*, and of course Christianity, whose being is God. ("I Am Who Is," Yahwe said.)

Heidegger appeared thus as the thinker who demolished the Christian God and Christianity itself, a good enough reason for the post-1945 intelligentsia to raise him to the pedestal occupied by Nietzsche. Even more deserving than the erratic and often self-contradicting hermit of Sils-Maria, Heidegger accumulated a number of advantages: unlike Nietzsche, he could be cast as a Herr Professor—a magician with meta-etymology in a semantically sensitive intellectual milieu, obviously a "pagan," he was so Olympian that he could despise Sartre as an amateur philosopher. The one thing standing between Heidegger and apotheosis (or its equivalent, the Nobel Prize) was his short *Rektorat* at the University of Freiburg during the Third Reich. He was Rektor for less than a year, but his inaugural discourse and short exhortatory texts in the student paper established him as a bona fide National-Socialist.

Why, then, has he been adulated for four decades, when his past ought to have turned him into a nonperson in the postwar climate (which, in this respect, has persisted)? It is obvious to anybody who can read that Heidegger was an antimonotheist, anti-Christian, and anti-Jew; yet the intelligentsia loved him and treated his every word like the pronouncement of an oracle. His affair with Hitlerism was incontrovertible and documented, and, in a sense, he never denied it. A whole library of articles has appeared between 1945 and today, saying essentially this: True, Heidegger praised the National-Socialist ideals, gave the Hitler salute, and never recanted. *But* he was not a racist, nor did he believe in biological superiority; he may have been a

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reactionary, but he believed in man's freedom. This was also the conclusion of a long interview, conducted by *Der Spiegel* in 1966 and published 10 years later after his death.

So much nonsense put forth by eager whitewashers must have a reason, particularly since among these pious embalmers there are many Jews (George Steiner) and many non-Jewish Nazi-hunters like Rudolf Augstein, publisher of *Der Spiegel* and a super-leftist of excellent standing.

Heidegger's reputation would have remained inviolate had not a new book by a certain Victor Farias, an unknown Chilean refugee living in France, thrown a bomb among cultists. The book, *Heidegger et le nazisme*, chronicles the hero's life and thought from beginning to end and concludes on the basis of massive evidence that the philosopher's life and thought were thoroughly compatible with the Hitlerist ideology. Immense embarrassment in the Heideggerian camp! Suddenly, nobody cares to reexamine the master's writings for possible anti-Semitism (but he *was* an antimonotheist, a cause which naturally had effects). His disciples are shying away from his suddenly putrid corpse—but they, the ex-worshipers, knew it, didn't they? Well, they did, but as long as only monotheism was at stake, or mere Christianity, it didn't matter. Now Farias unearthed, no, not any particular diatribe against Jews, but tidbits like a book Heidegger sent in 1960 to a certain Eugen Fischer, director in 1927 of the Institute of Racial Hygiene, inscribed "cordial greetings for the New Year."

Watching the Heideggerian tribe jump nervously away from the master's heritage is not edifying. Like Trotsky before, the German philosopher is now being fought over, and like Trotsky, he is on his way to becoming an unperson, erased from encyclopedias and doctoral dissertations. Here are some alarmed utterances by professors who did not or could not jump away fast enough since the publication of Farias' book, last fall: "Heidegger's adherence to Hitlerism was not a philosophical act" (Pierre Aubenque); "We gain nothing by transforming Heidegger into a kind of Rosenberg" (Gerard Granel); "Heidegger refused obstinately to acknowledge Auschwitz as a break in contemporary history" (Ph. Lacoue-Labarthe); "Let's not speak, in Heidegger's case, of Hitlerism but of a national-estheticism" . . . and so on and on, filling, for example, the January/February issue of the prestigious journal *le Débat*. Professors who made their career by writing, lecturing, paraphrasing, plagiarizing, and paneling on, about, around, and (alas!) in favor of Heidegger as the greatest philosopher of all times find themselves in a terrible dilemma: their fame and royalties will collapse if they abandon the storm-tossed (sinking?) ship; yet, if they remain on board, they too will be tarred with the brush of Nazism, and the fact that some Jewish academics will be too does not help.

We witness a huge, *fin-de-siècle* mystification, a pseudo-enigma that nobody dares solve. Heidegger had been deliberately turned into a sphinx, with enough interpreters around to veil his real philosophical obscenity, while his relatively insignificant *faux pas* is displayed as the century's major crime. Once again, the intellectuals are too cowardly to face facts and to apportion sin and virtue according to merit.

What *are* the facts? The most important is that if not directly Hitlerist, at least pagan/atheistic sympathies are built into Heidegger's philosophy. A thinker who sees Western philosophy as a 2,500-year-long betrayal of Being must expect Time to restore being to its rightful place. Keep in mind that Heidegger's major opus is called *Being and Time* (Sein und Zeit!). After the many betrayals and false approaches, Being will be unveiled (not "revealed," that would be too Christian-sounding), to and by the Philosopher. The latter's task is to be himself *on the way* to Being, to "shepherd" Being in man's world, to let Being manifest itself through him, the Philosopher. As Martin Buber clearly saw it, the Being that is coming among men was, for Heidegger temporarily, Hitler—the embodiment of the movement which was to create conditions for Being to appear. Heidegger wrote repeatedly (his repetitious style had the effect of an incantation) that we are now in an in-between era; the old gods, those of the pre-Christian world, had left, the new ones have not yet arrived.

What kind of gods will the new ones be? Like the Greek gods of Hölderlin, whom Heidegger regards as the greatest German poet/prophet, they will be superhuman heroes smashing the materialist, commercial, technological modern society. This is an old German myth, going back at least to Armenius, who defeated the Roman legions, and to Luther also, who shook his fist at another Rome. For Heidegger, too, Germany is the new Greece, the new pagan world causing the mutation of the West, and first of all the Western ideal of learning, with the professor's function being to serve as an oracular prophet, speaking from the depth of Being. Or rather, a prophet to whom Being unveils itself, a post-Zarathustra seeker. Is it not obvious now why Martin Heidegger accepted the appointment as university Rektor and conceived his inaugural address as a manifesto of philosophical renewal?

Greek history, Parmenidean wisdom built around the self-unveiling One, the Hellenic pantheon—and the betrayal of all these by Plato, Christ, and the Western bourgeois—form Heidegger's philosophico-mythical universe. We understand now Heidegger's receptivity to Hitler: mover of masses, *vates* of antibourgeois values and of the thousand-year super-empire, Hitler was for Heidegger the demigod, the Coming One who brings reality and dispels appearances, the oracular orator who names Being when he speaks new words: race, nation, youth, marching, adventure, *Deutschtum*. He was interviewed soon after the war ended by a fascinated Frenchman, Jean Beaufret. He spoke of fishes suffocating on dry land as a simile for statements we make about being, each time we use the verb *to be*. To say merely that something is, is an adulterated manner of treating Being, the only authentic form. Not even the philosopher can speak as reverentially of Being as we should—only the Poet can who then becomes the priest bringing sacrifice. Philosophy and mysticism meet in the unspeakable, the unutterable.

It would be a vast exaggeration to say that Heidegger found in Hitler's rhetoric and crowd-flattering slogans more than the usual democratic political prose, with a few twists. Heidegger was enamored with words and their precision; he could not admire their mechanical public uses. For some time, however, he could see himself as Hitler's teacher of truth, the way Plato hoped to teach truth to Dionysius, the Syracusan tyrant. Let us not underestimate philosophers'

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memories; Plato is a prototype of thinkers wanting to celebrate the marriage of ideas with political rule. This is also what the intellectuals sensed in Heidegger: politics tending to metapolitics, an unveiling of the genuine Logos.

What they admired was exactly what religious thinkers like Etienne Gilson, Hans Jonas, Cornelio Fabro, and others have condemned. Gilson speaks of Heidegger's "metaphysical immaturity," his incomprehension before the Logos made flesh as the solution of the ontological question. Jonas writes (10th essay in *The Phenomenon of Life*) that for Heidegger, revelation is immanent in the world since the world is divine. It is thus, for Heidegger, a permanent revelation, Jonas adds, so that the very idea of a true doctrine vanishes. Truth is always on the way; it is a self-unveiling process: yesterday the Greek gods, tomorrow those called forth by German national revival. For Fabro (*God in Exile*), Heidegger wants to make place for a "preontological experience," before the birth of concepts and the discourse which integrates them as philosophy. In sum, there was a remarkable unanimity facing Heidegger, but without the hysterics of intellectuals. The philosophers' verdict has been in for quite a while; why was Heidegger not criticized before on the intellectual forum place?; why only upon the appearance of a mediocre book by a Victor Farias?

"If I had religious faith," Heidegger, the one-time student of theology, wrote, "I would close up my philosopher's shop; if I prepared a theology book, I would never use the word Being." This distinction swept the intellectuals off their feet, for they saw in it the final emancipation of philosophy from belief. They could forgive the statement "Nazism is a humanism" because, if true, their own ideologies also had a chance, in the radical but real sense of the label "no God, only man." They were ready to applaud when Heidegger spoke of God as "the one before whom David sang and danced," that is a God of no consequence for philosophy, calling forth only emotional responses, not reflection. Pronouncing God dead, Heidegger became an ally, whether of neo-pagans, process theologians, Teilhardians, or simply of atheists with a lemon twist. Francis Guibal speaks of Heidegger waiting for a "truly divine God," one who (which?) is beyond God; not that of the Bible, not incarnate. Heidegger himself had rallied long ago to Meister Eckhart, who "had weakened God's figure as a creator for the benefit of a higher sort of intimacy [between God and man] in which God dissolves himself" (*"ent-wird ja sogar Gott,"* as Eckhart put it). If God is not Being, this is of course a possibility. Only man remains.

So we always return to the same proposition: the real god is man, whether individually, or as a race, a class, an esoteric sect, or a biological superman. This is why for a long time Heidegger was forgiven by the intelligentsia—its Jewish, Christian, pagan, humanist, and other members. Before Victor Farias cried out that the philosopher was naked, that Heidegger was a Nazi, the embarrassing episodes could be hidden. Yes, he was Rektor in 1934, but was he not also the Jewish Husserl's disciple and Hannah Arendt's lover? True, he never actually recanted, but, after all, was he not looking for a revived pagan Hellas like so many other opponents of the Church, among them Hegel and Nietzsche? True, he scoffed at Raymond Aron as a representative of democracy and *Das Kapital*, but did he not also predict the Great Mutation of the West, away from bourgeois values? True again, he disparaged democracy, stating that it suits only the exasperatingly shallow technological age, but did he not leave the future open to "authenticity" and "self-overcoming"? For every minus a plus was found, because condemning Heidegger meant the dismissal of the chief contemporary form of atheism, its academically most prestigious manifestation. Condemning Heidegger would have meant the restoration of religion and faith in God.

Where will the present debate lead? Most probably to a spate of books and symposia on "Heidegger's political thought." The hidden purpose—and the interest of the participants in the debate—is to separate Heidegger's philosophy (jealously guarded treasure) from his politics which would be unanimously cursed. What will therefore be underemphasized is the hardly deniable core of the controversy—that his politics follows from his philosophy, in other words that a thoroughly atheistic speculative system engenders totalitarian rule, whether of Robespierre, Lenin, or Hitler. This is, of course, the best-guarded secret in our intellectual marketplace, which has adulated Heidegger, not because of his merits as a speculative genius, or even as a metaphysician, but because of his sophisticated atheism. In Paris, where, after all, Heidegger was invented (like Hegel, Lukacs, and Gramsci), booksellers told me that by far the most popular books are Nietzsche's and Heidegger's. We may wonder what will happen now that Heidegger risks becoming taboo. Too many people have invested too much in his reputation as the century's oracle for them to go back on their enthusiastic and rash commitment.

LIBERAL ARTS

Profane Languages

The long march through the Modern Language Association continues. The MLA's delegate assembly, meeting recently—where else?—in San Francisco, proposed the following resolution:

> Be it therefore resolved that the Modern Language Association will refrain from locating future MLA conventions, not already scheduled, in any state that has criminalized acts of sodomy through legislation unless that legislation, though still on the books, has been found to be unconstitutional or the state has been enjoined from enforcing it through decisions rendered by the courts.

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POEMS
by
Charles Causley

The Mystery of St. Mylor

Dateless, quite weightless, the Holy Boy
Hovers alone in frosty light,
His naked tomb fringed with the gold
Of winter furze and aconite.

His silver hand, his brazen foot
Are fire against a sky of slate
And now are flesh and bone, and by
A miracle, articulate.

Here it was the virgin earth
Opened her side where he might lie,
Drew a green field above his brow
Until his huntsman passed him by.

And neither fell the rain nor hail,
Nor even spear of grass has grown,
And never a rag of snow that lay
Upon this roofless box of stone.

But when beside the famished sea
Prince Mylor lay as on a bed,
Silently his assassin came
And severed him his glittering head.
Plant your broad staff, Prince Mylor cried,
And it shall branch and it shall blow
And at its foot a root shall spring
And from that root a stream shall flow.

Tell me, I asked the Holy Boy,
The true mystery that you spell.
I leaned and listened for his voice.
It was the ringing of a bell.

In 1933

I see the deep November street,
The crowd suddenly still beneath
The dark lurch of the Castle Keep
As though the evening held its breath
Before the bell-man's starting cry
And the first rocket hit the sky.

It was a children's land: a tower,
Ships, houses grumbling in low gear,
The stick-man stalking through the Square,
Paraffin torches slopping fire,
A child's heart too afraid to ask
Which was a face and which a mask.

I see the gold set-piece that read
'God Save Our Empire,' as each head
In fireworks of the King and Queen
At the far end of Castle Green
Dribbled blue flame, began to sprout
Flowers of dark. Went slowly out.

Sibard's Well

My house, named for the Saxon spring,
Stands by the sour farmyard, the long-
Dry lip that once was Sibard's Well
Buried beneath a winding-stone
To stop the cattle falling in;
Yet underfoot is still the sound
At last of night, at first of day,
In country silences, a thin
Language of water through the clay.

At mornings, in small light, I hear
Churn-clink, the bucket handle fall.
An iron shirt, a sudden spear
Unprop themselves from the farm wall.
A voice, in a far, altered speech
Beneath my window seems to say,
'I too lived here. I too awoke
In quarter-light, when life's cold truth
Was all-too clear. As clearly spoke.'

At St. Hilary

Between two Cornish seas, the spire
Blazes the land, the waving air.

The dark stem of a Celtic cross
Sprouts, half-grown, from the shallow grass.

A tomb, exploded, shows the bones
Of a young sycamore. Slant stones

Cram the graveyard like ships stormbound.
A wasted urn drips shard and sand.

Like auguries, two seabirds lie
Motionless in the squalling sky.

Through rain and wind and risen snow
I come, as fifty years ago,

Drawn by I know not what, to sound
A fabled shore, unlost, unfound,

Where in the shadow of the sun
Past, present, future, wait as one.

Only the breathing ash speaks true.
Nothing is new. Nothing is new.

As the sea slinks to where I stand
Between the water and the land.

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New York Writing *by Thomas P. McDonnell*

"To write simply is as difficult as to be good."
—Somerset Maugham

The Bonfire of the Vanities **by Tom Wolfe, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $19.95.**

It is just possible that Tom Wolfe's first novel, *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, may be more important for extra-literary reasons than for purely literary ones. Of course, there are no purely literary reasons for anything, especially in the form of fiction, perhaps the most massive impure art form ever invented. But to say that this large but strangely slick hunk of a book may be important, almost as if on appearance, is simply to locate its possible significance in a brace of considerations: (1) as an occasion for stock-taking on the state of the American novel today; and (2) as a symptom of the cultural situation itself.

Roughly speaking, there are two obvious currents which flow in the mainstream of American fiction. One has to do with what we recognize as the imperishable works of our literature—in the great fictions, say, of Hawthorne, Melville, James, Edith Wharton, Willa Cather, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Saul Bellow—while the other has to do with those strictly perishable and peripheral productions which in any period comprise the bulk of the best-seller listings. In the first instance, we have almost ceased to produce any fiction of major importance, and this for the shockingly simple reason that we have at the same time failed to produce a new generation of great readers. Today, indeed, the survivors in literacy must exert themselves to handle the works of John Jakes, Danielle Steele, and the rest. That's where adult reading is today.

At this early point, it is difficult to go on without resorting to a basically subjective view and allowing scholarly objectivity to slide quietly into the dustbin. In the overview, I can see only one aspect in which Tom Wolfe's *The Bonfire of the Vanities*—a marvelous title, by the way—may be said to have any relationship at all to the novel of classical tradition. Certainly, it has no relationship to the great novels as far as thoughtful and reflective prose is concerned. There are no structural points of rest in Tom Wolfe's self-devouring fiction, such as can be found, for example, in the famous trout-fishing scene from *The Sun Also Rises*. Everything is so full of hype and superficial effects that one might easily miss the way *The Bonfire of the Vanities* is likely to survive what remains of our rapidly diminishing century. It is a novel of New York City. The city is the hero, the heroine, the comic and tragic figure of it all. It is indeed the bonfire of our vanities. All flesh is grass and burns at last in the consuming fire of our vast inanities. The shocker is that Tom Wolfe doesn't know it.

As for literary effects, *The Bonfire of the Vanities* has perhaps forever unfocused any image we may still have of Henry James's New York as the prevailing and classical recreation of that particular time and place. The term "literary effects" has ironic relevance here insofar as this is the only level on which Tom Wolfe can compete with the one and only master of civilized prose we have produced on this continent and displaced to another. But if there is anything that Wolfe doesn't want to know, it's how to write a complex and Jamesian sentence. Again, he is the artist of the electronic impulse, our laureate of the age of television who has legitimized the tradition of trash. In *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, Tom Wolfe has achieved the apotheosis of glitz.

I feel that it has been necessary to say these things aside from any attempt to provide the reader with a summary of plot. The trouble is, the plot isn't all that interesting. It is the author's retelling of the myth of Little Red Riding Hood and the Big Bad Wolf (if he'll pardon the expression) let loose in New York City. Sherman McCoy is Little Red Riding Hood, a bungling innocent of an investment banker making about a million per year with the prestigious firm of Pierce & Pierce, who still allows himself to become hopelessly victimized by crime, the law, and social circumstance. A voracious and composite ethnic minority is the Big Bad Wolf that gobbles McCoy alive. The book is on fast-forward all the time, without any letup, so that characters and incidents flash by in a multiplicity of scenes that will no doubt become easily adapted to a TV mini-series or to movie screens in our cement block clinics across the land. All the characters—the dull but decorative wife, the seductive and obligatory mistress, cops and lawyers, high investors as well as the sleazy hustlers that infest the city at its lowest levels—are caricatures of types that the well-conditioned reader and potential viewer will recognize immediately and have no further need to relate to the untoward complexities of reality itself.

Tom Wolfe's typographical tricks are all resplendently and tediously displayed: the onomatopoeic spellings, relentlessly supplied whether the reader requires them or not, and such homophonics as may even reduce the word "talk" to *tawk*. It is difficult not to

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wonder, momentarily, just how Mr. Wolfe would have us pronounce the word "talk," if not *tawk*, or does he want the "l" pronounced, too, as in *talc*? Frankly, if more prudently edited on the side of bulk alone, *The Bonfire of the Vanities* would make the very zinger of a tape-recorded book. It fairly bristles with sound effects. But in the end, after all the hijinks have been duly performed and put to rest, this is an overlarge novel of very small consequence. It has all the substantiality of spun cotton candy for the junk-food addicts of the new illiteracy.

In an interview published in the *Boston Globe* (November 13, 1987), Tom Wolfe said something which may indicate why his first novel lacks any substance beyond its momentary glitter as an exciting media product. He said: "We're now in a period of freedom *from* religion; we've long since gone through freedom *of* religion. The last freedom is to remove the internal shackles of ethics, morality, all those things. That's been the great struggle of the last 20 years, and that struggle's been largely successful." This is a very curious statement for a novelist to make, I think, as it removes the main source of tension which the drama of human relationships irresistibly compels: I mean, of course, the moral dimension. The moderns have now displaced Cardinal John Henry Newman's sensible dictum — that we cannot have a sinless literature in a sinful world — with the notion that a sinful world itself is an illusion of the ethicist. But if this is the case, who gives a damn about Sherman McCoy anyway?

Electric Logocentricity *by E. Christian Kopff*

***The Bonfire of the Vanities* by Tom Wolfe, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $19.95.**

In the beginning was the Word. Not *verbum*, the written word, thought Erasmus, but *sermo*, the spoken word. Whatever its validity for understanding St. John's Gospel, literature that matters seems to split along the lines of that dichotomy. There are exciting and important books that dance on the page, wheeling and turning at the command of a master drill sergeant, able to conquer vast terrains, but in silence. Read Kant, for instance, aloud, and his magic vanishes. Then there are the masters of the spoken language, who charm us because we can hear their voices, even if we cannot follow everything they are saying: Plato, Virgil, Dante, St. John himself.

Tom Wolfe belongs to the electric masters of logocentricity. To this day I can hear the famous party that pulsates at the center of "Radical Chic." "Mr. Bernsteen." "STEIN!" Of course, there are other sensual images in Wolfe's carnival. He begins *The Painted Word* by comparing the experience of reading the Sunday *New York Times* not to an intellectual activity but to sinking slowly into a soporific hot tub. The image is as illuminating as it is witty. In the end, however, Tom Wolfe is meant to be read aloud.

In comparison with those earlier tone poems, *The Bonfire of the Vanities* is an oratorio sung by full choir. "There are eight million stories in the Naked City," the old TV show used to end. It seems as though there are that many voices in this novel and each one heard and captured by Wolfe like a prize Lepidoptera, to be pinned exactly in context or, just as often, shoved violently into a situation where it stands out like a yuppie's yellow tie against a Mafioso's black shirt.

It is not easy to find the right parallel for this epic, performed not by a bard but by a city of voices. The main plot is a variant on Evelyn Waugh's *Decline and Fall*, though with a surprise ending out of Baudelaire's "*Ecrasez les Pauvres!*" (Well, I am trying not to give it away.) The depiction of the working stiffs of New York, seen at first harshly and crudely, but then revealed as rooted in intelligence and moral commitment, reminds me of the best of James Gould Cozzens. The one real parallel, however, seems to me John Kennedy Toole's *A Confederacy of Dunces*. Wolfe's novel lacks the unforgettable hero of that comic masterpiece, but I left both books with my ears full of the sounds, spoken, whispered, shouted, of a great city.

Wolfe delights in playing with a significant linguistic reality, the use of the third person singular of the verb "to do" as a class marker in contemporary America. The educated use "he does not" as a matter of course, just as the poorer use "he don't." To appreciate Wolfe's magic, however, you have to hear the intermediary sections of our society. We listen in on a D.A. trying to lure cooperation out of a recalcitrant black witness. To say "he does not" in that room would freeze up the witness by showing that he is confronted by a foreigner who speaks a different dialect. Alone with a trusted aide, preaching on the rights of the poor and puffed up with altruistic self-righteousness, the D.A. reverts to "he does not." Future historians of American English will treasure this book.

Each reader will find his favorite part of this extravaganza. My own includes the savage picture of the parasitic Englishman, come over to work on the *New York Post*, who always slips away just before the check arrives, leaving it for the silly Yank off whom he wines and dines. There is the searing contrast between elite WASP America, which leaves even its closest friends in the lurch if notoriety impinges, with the dogged loyalty and honesty of middle-class Irish lawyers and policemen. The student of ethics will find as much to ponder as the linguist.

In the end, however, I remember the sounds: the laughter at an upper-class party, the background hysteria of the bonds market on Wall Street, the accents of English and German, of rich and poor. As Browning's Fra Lippo Lippi made us notice things we have had before us all our lives but have never seen, Tom Wolfe makes us hear the sounds of our own society. We shall never sound the same again.

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Dealhead of the Century *by Janet Scott Barlow*

"Hey, if you hit the ball right, it goes. What can I tell you."
—Lenny Dykstra, author and New York Mets outfielder

Trump: The Art of the Deal **by Donald J. Trump with Tony Schwartz, New York: Random House; $19.95.**

Six years ago my husband added action to an idea and started his own business. Today his company has 130 employees and $13 million in sales. At 13 million, we are not exactly swimming with the big fish of American business. Nevertheless, the past six years have been, to drastically understate it, an education. Ours has been a deep immersion into a small pond—one just large enough to include its share of venture capitalists, tax lawyers, trademark attorneys, bankers, accountants, and corporate big shots.

We have also encountered two business species I never before knew existed, what I have come to call the sniffers and the dealheads. Sniffers are people who loudly and confidently predict a new venture's quick collapse, and then, when proved wrong, come poking around—sniffing—for a cut, an angle, or a job. Dealheads are sniffers on a big scale, more highly evolved and therefore harder to ignore. Dealheads do not have professions, careers, or even real jobs. They don't sell a product or provide a service. Dealheads just *deal*, substituting "connections" for creativity, and "street-smarts" for expertise. They are habitual name-droppers, total suckers for the trappings of "class," and forever hopeful of a big deal with Jack Nicklaus, having once met "Jack" on an elevator. While they often ignore ethical considerations, dealheads do not operate illegally; and there is something very American in their outlook: do it fast, hit it big, find the shortcut.

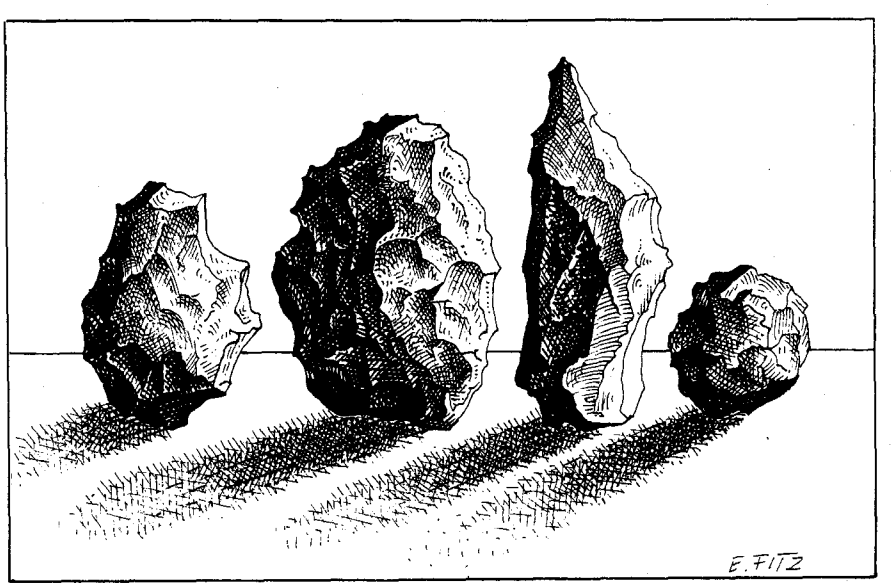
Legal questions and national character aside, I have come to loathe dealheads, because their shortcut to doing it fast and hitting it big runs, by necessity and instinct, straight through someone else's accomplishment. The essence of every dealhead's deal is always this: "I will take the fruit of your efforts, risk it on a deal, make a fixed cut for myself upfront (hey, I'm the dealer) and more on the backend if the deal succeeds. As for you, you will either make an unspecified return or lose your shirt. And on the off chance that you don't like that deal, I am prepared to offer you my services as an independent consultant for a ridiculously large fee."

The main thing to know about dealheads is that they should never, under any circumstances, be encouraged. Which is why the publication of real estate developer Donald Trump's business autobiography, *Trump: The Art of the Deal*, is such a depressing event. While not a pure dealhead himself (there are occasions when he appears to operate with his own cash), Trump nonetheless has produced the ultimate dealhead handbook, and every crummy little dealhead in the country is going to be invigorated, motivated, *inspired* by it. The results will not be pretty.

In the past, dealheads (and certain varieties of salesmen and managers) sought their professional inspiration in the distilled philosophies of sports figures, usually football coaches, notably Vince Lombardi. But that began to change with the cultural emergence of the corporate leader as folk hero—an image which peaked, seemingly, with the publication of Lee Iacocca's blustering autobiography. Vince Lombardi could finally rest in peace; dealheads had found one of their own to emulate. On office walls around the country, framed copies of "Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing" were replaced with framed Iacoccaisms (my personal favorite being "In order to hit the duck, you have to move your gun").

Now here comes Donald Trump with a whole new batch of slogans, easily memorized and suitable for framing. There are the Basic Attitude slogans: "You do your thing, you hold your ground, you stand up tall, and whatever happens, happens." There are the General Perspective slogans: "I try to learn from the past, but I plan for the future by focusing exclusively on the present." Looking for something succinct and punchy? (Have a smaller frame?) "Leverage: don't make deals without it."

Still, the sports connection lingers, for *Trump: The Art of the Deal* reads like the as-told-to life story of an outfielder for the New York Mets. That is,



Janet Scott Barlow covers popular culture from her home in Cincinnati, Ohio.

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it is not a book. It is a muscle-bound monologue that has been wrestled by a "collaborator" into a heap of paragraphs, most of which begin with "I," and all of which are assumed to be fascinating by virtue of the subject's celebrity. The volume displays that distinctly inert prose found in all "talked" books. You see, the *words* just aren't there. Donald Trump is without skill at associating ideas and feelings with words, or words with meanings. Based on his book, Donald Trump is a less-than-articulate man.

That the last thing less-than-articulate people should be doing is putting out books is of no concern to Donald Trump. This is Donald Trump talking, *the* Donald Trump, "America's most glamorous young tycoon." For publishing purposes, he is the entrepreneurial equivalent of a well-hyped major leaguer coming off a championship year. That being the standard, it is enough that we are privy in *The Art of the Deal* to a full week, hour-by-hour, of Trump's business diary (he declines invitations, he drafts a letter, he chooses Christmas decorations, he drinks some juice; he calls Ivan Boesky, he calls Calvin Klein, he calls Judith Krantz, he calls his sister). It is enough that we can learn Trump's thoughts on the "genius" of Sylvester Stallone ("a man who is just forty-one years old, and [has] already created two of the all-time-great characters, Rocky and Rambo"), his color preferences ("I happen to like earth tones. They are richer and more elegant than primary colors"), and his plans for his New York apartment ("What I'm doing is about as close as you're going to get, in the twentieth century, to the quality of Versailles").

The effect of this lumpish conceit varies. Often it is simply comical. Here is Trump, a man who believes in getting things "done right," relating the personal qualities of those closest to him:

> I have a father who has always been a rock. . . .
> . . . I'm as much of a rock as my father.
> My mother is as much of a rock as my father.
> [My wife] also happens to be a rock, just like my mother and father.

A Mets outfielder couldn't have said it any better. Donald Trump is characterizing his family as a bunch of rocks. Well, as Trump himself says, "I'm a very practical guy"—so practical that he can make do with one description for four loved ones.

Trump is also a busy guy. He's busy thinking big, really big, monumentally big. As big as you can get. *Huge*. His special gift is to be at once "practical" and grandiose: "To me it's very simple: if you're going to be thinking anyway, you might as well think big." But what exactly *is* "big"? What does it *mean*? Trump is ready with an answer: Big is "a whole different order of magnitude."

"Think Big" is the first of Donald Trump's 11 "Elements of the Deal," the main insight onto which the other 10 are pasted, like little cutouts from every superficial business book ever written. There is Trump's advice to "deal from strength," and his opinion that those who question the man of boldness and imagination are "life's losers," victims of "jealousy and envy." There is his "key" to self-promotion, which is "bravado . . . truthful hyperbole . . . an innocent form of exaggeration," always effective with people who "may not always think big themselves, but . . . get very excited by those who do." There is his revelation that "I keep a lot of balls in the air" (big balls, presumably). Best of all, there is Trump's theory of "controlled neurosis."

Those fortunate enough to possess controlled neurosis—which is the manifestation of "total focus," which is the secret to thinking big—are "obsessive, they're driven, they're singleminded and sometimes they're almost maniacal. . . . Where other people are paralyzed by neurosis, [successful entrepreneurs] are actually helped by it." By "helped," Trump does not mean that these men find "a happier life, or a better life." He just means that controlled neurosis is "great when it comes to getting what you want." But what if what you want *is* "a happier life, or a better life?" Please. If that's your question, you've obviously lost "total focus."

Donald Trump's 11 "Elements of the Deal," the soul of his entrepreneurial philosophy, cover 10 whole pages of his book. Power-packed as those pages are, they pale alongside Trump's real contribution to American business culture: his book's title and the thinking behind that title. *The Art of the Deal* is a brilliant title, the perfect culmination of a decade of business mythmaking. The stories about "fearless innovators" and "marketing wizards" long ago gave way to profiles of business "geniuses." Finally everybody and his brother was a genius (including Sylvester Stallone), and it was time for a new word, a new concept.

Donald Trump has it: the deal as "art." "Deals are my art form," says Trump. "Other people paint beautifully on canvas or write wonderful poetry. I like making deals, preferably big deals. That's how I get my kicks." It follows that if Donald Trump considers dealing an art, then Donald Trump, dealer par excellence, must consider himself an artist. It further follows that America's dealheads, being magnets for "truthful hyperbole," will start defining themselves as artists, too. Making art and getting kicks. I *told* you it wouldn't be pretty.

The dealheads are being had, of course, which is what they get for moving beyond the simplistic metaphors of football. For while Donald Trump is happy to present himself as a role model for would-be big thinkers, he does not for a moment expect real competition from them—or from anyone else. The first message of Donald Trump's book is that Donald Trump is incomparable. The second message is that if Trump is not at all like the rest of us he is very democratic about it: he fully supports our right to want to be like him. He is a staggeringly unique individual who is also a regular guy, a one-of-a-kind business colossus who proves his humanity by inviting anyone—*everyone*—to be impressed by him.

It is a dual message of egomania and condescension that could be taken seriously only by compulsive role players with time on their hands. It is a message for dealheads—who are reading it at this very moment and quivering with artistic resolve: to become more rock-like, to develop a controlled neurosis, to avoid the use of primary colors. Put them all together, they spell "a whole different order of magnitude."

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An Unpeaceable Kingdom

by Paul T. Stallsworth

***Uncivil Religion — Interreligious Hostility in America*, edited by Robert N. Bellah and Frederick E. Greenspahn, New York: Crossroad Publishing Company; $17.95.**

It was one of those Saturday nights that spills over into Sunday morning. Invited into the home of a main-line Protestant couple in split-level northern New Jersey, the 40ish group was made up of Jews and Roman Catholics from the neighborhood and of visiting Southern Baptists from Texas. After enjoying much conversation and suffering the consequences of too much Tex-Mex, everyone gathered around for a little guitar sing. Many songs later, the evening finally ended with everybody belting out with feeling the old standby "Amazing Grace."

There is something truly amazing about that — about Jews, Protestants (both main-line and evangelical), and Roman Catholics un-self-consciously singing together about the salvation of "a wretch like me." There is no doubt that this incident demonstrates religious civility, or peace of a sort, or an amorphous unity. At least an American is tempted to respond triumphantly to it with "Only in America!" And it is not that uncommon an event in the United States today: To the unsuspecting observer, the various religious communities in America appear to be as friendly to each other as fraternity rush chairmen are to their "rushees."

However, despite such nice religious goings on, all is not peaches and cream in religious America today, nor has it ever been. *Uncivil Religion* serves as a strong reminder of that. This book contains 10 essays that describe the religious tensions — between Jews and Christians, between Protestants and Catholics, between liberals and conservatives, and between mainstream groups and emerging groups — that have existed and now exist in American public life. These essays on hostility are written by various scholars of American religion (four of the 10, interestingly enough, have been active participants in conferences sponsored by The Rockford Institute Center on Religion & Society in New York). Furthermore, they are introduced by a short piece by Frederick E. Greenspahn and concluded by a longer article by Robert (*Habits of the Heart*) Bellah. It should be noted that the essays of this book include extensive and scholarly footnotes for the sake of further investigation.

The book gets off to a rousing start with Jonathan Sarna's chronicle of Jewish-Christian hostilities from a Jewish point of view. Sarna's article itself might even generate a few hostilities

REVISIONS

American Pie

The loss of economic sovereignty inevitably leads to diminished political freedom. That, at any rate, is the claim made by Martin and Susan Tolchin in *Buying Into America* (New York: Times Books; $19.95; 400 pages). Using the Japanese as a paradigm, the Tolchins insist that this latest threat to America must be met by outmanaging, outproducing, and outselling the competition.

There is a growing support for this all-American thesis in a variety of quarters. According to Edward Lincoln, "Japanese investment is a challenge for us. If we can't meet it, we deserve to work for the Japanese." The Japanese, naturally, agree. In the words of Kiyoshi Suzaki, a Japanese expert busy giving advice to American business, "U.S. must learn from Japan," which means singing the company anthem every morning and taking part in clenched-fist cheerleading sessions.

American workers are less than enthusiastic. Billy Sellars, a union leader in a Japanese-owned-and-operated Bridgestone tire plant in Tennessee, complains that, "For the Japanese, their jobs are number one," while in America, "religion and family come first, at least in my family." Such total commitment to the firm does not fit very well into the American experience; it has, however, deep roots in the soil of Japan.

When Admiral Perry opened up Japan by gunboat, the country had neither industry nor trade, in the modern sense of the word. The samurai rulers despised merchants, craftsmen, and serfs — anyone unwilling to risk life and limb for honor and merit. By 1905, however, the samurai had gone to military and polytechnic schools in Europe and with the help of Western technology managed to defeat Imperial Russia. In World War I, they held their own against the Germans. But in 1945, after bombing the Empire of the Rising Sun into submission, the Americans came to Japan again. The Japanese gambit at supremacy by war had failed, but true to their heritage, the samurai decided to recoup their military losses in a different sphere: business. They did so by applying their military codes to the free market.

The comparable model in the West is the command economy. In extolling the Americans to become like the Japanese, the authors of *Buying Into America* are using the threat of foreign economic takeover of the United States to appeal for almost wartime federal control of the economy. In the Tolchins' New Deal vision, economic warfare demands a corporatist order — an America united spiritually, economically, nationally, and politically by the need to protect the store.

It is true that America is beleaguered — in many more ways than economic — but bottom-line exhortations can hardly inspire the country's best and brightest. Until the true nature of the outside economic threat is realized, the Japanese — among many other nations — will continue to conduct their trade with the U.S. as war by other means. The worst anyone can do (as the Japanese had found out, by 1945) is to join battle on the adversaries' turf and terms.

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among Christian readers, for he cites many sources that attempt to uncover attacks on the Jewish community everywhere, even in the benevolent and the benign—in all Christian goodwill expressed toward Jews and Judaism, and in Christian translations of the Hebrew Bible. John Murray Cuddihy follows with a fascinating argument: too often, he contends, Jews are depicted as "morally blameless." Too often the question is posed, "How do bad things [read: anti-Semitic] happen to this good people?" Cuddihy's sources run from *New York Times* editorials to Woody Allen to Elie Wiesel. It might be said that this chapter exhibits a degree of courage in an always difficult, complex, and sensitive area.

In chapters by Barbara Welter and Jay P. Dolan, both Protestants and Roman Catholics are found blameworthy for the tensions that have existed between their communities. Some Protestants, it seems, were into spreading nasty lies about what happens behind the locked doors of convents, while Tridentine Catholics were often content to look on members of the "Protestant Revolt" as misguided folk outside the true salvation of The, or Their, Church. Mark A. Noll's chapter announces the good news of the Protestant-Catholic rapprochement of our day and the not-so-good news of the three presently contending parties (the new party, the old party, and the Americanist party) within the two larger communities.

George Marsden addresses the liberal-conservative wars by focusing on the evolutionist-creationist controversy; there he spots antisupernaturalist fundamentalists and supernaturalist fundamentalists fighting it out in such a way that reason and diplomacy become impossible. Marsden's connections between the South, the Civil War, religion, and creationism are especially interesting. Chapters on liberal-conservative tensions also examine the Jewish and Roman Catholic communities.

The book's last example of uncivil religion involves emerging or new religions. Mormonism and the Unification Church are seen as movements that offer a blatant challenge to their host society. When these movements did not accommodate their belief and practice so that they might "fit in," their host proceeded to label them "cults," exclude them socially, and then persecute them. Persecution ranged and ranges from legislation to "deprogramming" to the jabs from *Saturday Night Live*.

These essays are convincing. It is hard not to agree that American religion has had a very uncivil side. Even today Jews, Protestants, Roman Catholics, and non-name-brand types (i.e., "secular humanists" and others) often do not get along famously inside or outside their communities. But the most fundamental tension in American religion today, according to Robert Bellah (and when Bellah speaks, he should be listened to—though not necessarily agreed with), is between those who seek community without significant boundaries (in terms of belief and practice) and those who seek community with significant boundaries. Some of the former might desire a Club Methodist, for example, in which freedom of choice reigns; some of the latter strive for a Methodist *church* complete with definite commitment and a clear-cut identity. The danger Bellah fears most is that the Club will prove to be more attractive than the Church. If it is, Bellah worries, indeed if it triumphs, it "would destroy both the moral norms that provide the terms for our democratic conversation and the communities that carry those moral norms and ethical concerns, including the religious communities." It would destroy both Church and society.

Unfortunately, pinpointing and worrying about the demise of religious community with boundaries does not actually create religious community with boundaries (though some might say that a pseudoreligious community has formed around Bellah's *Habits*). But still, it is a beginning. And it will certainly contribute to some truly creative and constructive hostilities in American religion, which will, it is hoped, differ greatly from those that have gone before.

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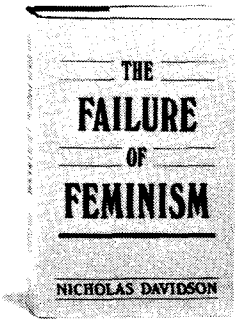
The Failure of Feminism

by Nicholas Davidson



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Letter From a State of Mind

by Jacob Neusner

The Religion of Neoconservatism

Did you ever wonder why Jewish neoconservative thinkers never argue "from" Judaism, in the way in which Michael Novak argues from Roman Catholicism, and Richard Neuhaus argues from Lutheran Christianity? That is to say, Judaism never forms a point of departure and never defines a court of appeal. For the Jewish neoconservatives Judaism simply does not exist. They do not despise the Judaic religious tradition and its intellectual heritage. They simply ignore it. For them, religion may serve valid purposes; it may even be beautiful; but it forms no intellectual reality from which, or even against which, to mount sustained thought.

I cannot explain why, because I am not a neoconservative, although I am Jewish. On the contrary, I was a conservative before I knew it, stayed a Democrat long after voting for Republicans (but made the move in 1968 anyhow). When I was a Henry Fellow at Oxford University, 35 years ago, I discovered that I was a conservative, not a liberal, certainly not a socialist. As a Jew, the discovery surprised me. What I found was that the British left in the early 50's was anti-American, the right was pro-American, and I was an American. We were just emerging from the Korean War, which, I firmly believed, had saved South Korea from Communist aggression. But the left in Oxford told me that we were the aggressors and should pay retributions to North Korea. These same folk had just come back from an international Youth Festival in Bucharest and brought with them other wonders and marvels to behold.

Shortly after arrival in September 1953, I located the Oxford University Blue Ribbon Society, the elite (so they told me) of the conservatives, and for their magazine wrote up "Youth Festival in Bucharest: A Study in Fatuity." For my efforts I was roundly abused by the Socialists, and happily joined the fray. I defended not what was then called McCarthyism but the view that Communist espionage presented a serious problem to Western security. I pointed to the Soviet domination of eastern Europe and the threat to Germany. In these and other ways I found a comfortable position in the conservative side of Oxford politics in that interesting year. When I came home, it was, of course, as a Democrat, but a conservative one. I began voting for Republicans, and by the mid-1960's, the identification with the Republican Party was complete. I began reading, then writing for *National Review* long before Vietnam got rough, and identified with the politics outlined by William F. Buckley Jr., long, long before Norman Podhoretz had broken ranks.

I tell this brief story to indicate that although I am a Jew and a conservative, I am not a neoconservative. Since people generally think that neoconservatives are Jewish intellectuals who have given up on the left, it is important to set forth one's own credentials, especially since one trait of the Jewish neocons strikes me as profoundly hostile to conservatism in culture. That is their utterly tone-deaf audience to the religion, Judaism. While paying respect to religion as instrumentally useful, the Jewish neocons maintain a vigorous apathy toward Judaism. We see this, every month, in *Commentary*, which while describing itself as somehow connected to the Jewish world represents the Judaic life of intellect by disdain and silence. That is not a new policy to be sure. Even in the late 1940's, the great rabbi-intellectual Milton Steinberg dismissed *Commentary* as utterly hostile to the rich intellectual life of Judaism. It was true, then, when *Commentary* belonged to the left, and it is equally true now, with *Commentary* a bulwark of conservatism in international and social policy.

Just now I asked myself why it should be the case that while the Jewish conservatives (not neoconservatives) of an earlier generation, represented by Will Herberg and Seymour Siegel, should have lived out a rich affirmation of the Judaic religious tradition and themselves helped enrich the Judaic intellectual tradition, the Jewish neoconservatives want nothing to do with either religion or religious intellectual life, when these are framed by Judaism. The occasion of this question was a letter from Sidney Hook, whom I have admired my whole life.

He had sent me a brilliant article on the conflict between Communist Party membership and the possibility of participating in universities as they flourish in the West. I read it, sent it on to the *Providence Journal* in the hope that they would understand from it why Brown University should not cooperate with the KGB's Institute of the USA and Canada, with Rostock University in East Germany, and with various other Communist centers of higher learning and research — and then say so. Then I thanked Professor Hook and, by way of reply, sent him a small monograph of mine, *The Making of the Mind of Judaism*.

The choice of the book was not without consideration. It is a work addressed to a problem of philosophy, signaled, to be sure, by my theft of the title of the great work by Randall. I wanted to know the relationship between the logic of intelligible discourse in the rabbinic texts of late antiquity and the conceptual limitations imposed by the dominant logic upon the minds shaped by that logic. Now the book may not accomplish its goals, and it certainly will not teach logic to any second year philosophy student. But it does address a question a great philosophical mind like Hook should appre-

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ciate. Not only so, but the book purports to answer the question of why science did not develop in Judaism, that is, a typical question in the great tradition of Max Weber: why no capitalism in China or India or Judaism?

Explaining why he could not be bothered to read the book, Hook replied to me, "With respect to Jewish or Judaic learning and lore, because of the primitive Jewish education to which I was exposed in the Brooklyn slum in which I grew up, I am an *haaretz* [ignoramus]. There was never time to make it up, although I read avidly in the history of the Jews and one time the English and German translations of the books of Josephus, who fascinated me."

The Jewish study Hook found worth pursuing was then the historical and the secular, not the holy books but the one extant secular writing of ancient Jewish life, Josephus' histories. Given the majestic voyage Hook undertook, from the left to the right, given the man's remarkable capacity to learn and grow through life, his dismissal of Judaic intellectual life ("there was never time to make it up") is remarkable. It makes us wonder how someone who could rethink everything else would not ask himself whether, in his original exposure to the Judaic tradition, he might have missed something important.

I point to Hook not because he is exceptional but because he is quite exemplary of the attitude toward Judaism characteristic of the Jewish neoconservatives, their writings, and the magazines and platforms and foundations they control. The contrast between *National Review*, with its regular page devoted to religion (now edited by Richard John Neuhaus) and *Commentary*, with never a word on Judaism, stands for much else. Why has the encounter with conservatism, with its profound appreciation for Christianity (particularly Roman Catholic Christianity) not as useful but as true, left an entire cohort of Jewish intellectuals indifferent to Judaism? I think the answers will vary, from case to case. In the instance of Hook, he went from his Jewish roots to philosophy. He did not despise, he merely dismissed his encounter with the relics of the mind of Judaism, and he never went back to look again. He concluded that Judaic thought was intellectually inconsequential, perhaps an embarrassment. As he moved from left to right, he reconsidered every judgment but that one.

Norman Podhoretz had a far superior Jewish education, studying in his college years at Jewish Theological Seminary of America. I remember that when he was chosen editor of *Commentary*, the fact that he had a Jewish education and was supposed to be able even to read Hebrew was cited as reason for celebration; it was an element in his portfolio. Podhoretz quickly disappointed those who thought exposure to learning at JTSA would make much difference. He removed the regular stigmata of Judaic writing that the magazine had long featured, e.g., a monthly column, *Cedars of Lebanon*, of Judaic classical prose. He dismissed all of the contributors of Judaic articles; in the 1950's, despite the generally sound critique of Steinberg, the magazine published articles of classic and enduring value, for example, important papers by Heschel and Buber. He printed occasional papers of great value by Gershom G. Scholem and Jacob Katz, a regular column of exceptional acuity by Robert Alter on Jewish literature (for literature, like history, is kosher because it is secular), and that was that. Not a single Judaic religious thinker has been published in *Commentary* in a quarter of a century. *Commentary* is Jewish but never Judaic. Indeed, apart from intense interest in Israeli matters, even the episodes of serious Jewish, if not Judaic, writing decline in frequency.

Anything Jewish may find its place in the world view of the neocons of Jewish origin, history, sociology, literature, politics — anything except religion. That seems to me anomalous, and I point to the anomaly. All I know is that, when it comes to the rich and sanctifying Judaic religious life, with its sophisticated intellectual heritage of reflection and rigorous thought, these people stand at one with the left, in unity with the learned despisers of religion. Their conservatism has not yet fulfilled itself.

Jacob Neusner is Ungerleider Distinguished Scholar of Judaic Studies at Brown University.

Letter From APSA

by Barry Alan Shain

A Party Without Guests

At the last American Political Scientists Association (APSA) convention in Chicago (September 3-6, 1987), I was immediately struck, and happily so, by the unusual attention given to historical matters. This certainly was a reflection of the convention's theme that was a response to last year's bicentennial celebration of the national Constitution. Nevertheless, there were two aspects of this new historical sensibility that I found deeply dissatisfying. The two central historical themes — the Constitution and republicanism — were badly handled and, rather than reflecting simple incompetence, their distorted presentation told of the deeply held ideological, religious, and class biases amongst almost all of the association's membership.

My dissatisfaction with the panels and the ensuing papers on the Constitution resulted from what I took to be a misplaced emphasis on trying to discover with apodictic certainty what the original intent of the founders was. Under any understanding of constitutional jurisprudence, the intent of the delegates to the national convention is at best a tangential question and, at worst, purely specious on at least two different levels of analysis.

First, we know that many of the nationalist promoters of the convention — including the two central authors of the main apologia for the document, Hamilton and Madison — were deeply dissatisfied with the final outcome. On this level of analysis, therefore, their original intentions can tell us nothing about the final document or how it should be understood. This intellectual confusion is not a matter of bias but simply of a mistaken approach to the problem. It is on the second level of analysis, however, that strong possibility of intellectual bias crops up.

Putting aside how many Americans actually supported the new frame of national government (be it 5 percent or 20 percent), the importance attached to the intention of the "founders" flies directly in the face of the original legitimacy on which this government rested. This framework of national gov-

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ernment was raised to the level of fundamental law by the consent of the people, and not by the desires, dreams, or visions of our national elite. Even Madison himself observed that:

> As a guide in expounding and applying the provisions of the Constitution, the debates and incidental decisions of the Convention can have no authoritative character. However desirable it be that they should be preserved as a gratification to the laudable curiosity felt by every people to trace the origin and progress of their political Institutions . . . the legitimate meaning of the Instrument must be derived from the text itself; or if a key is to be sought elsewhere, it must be not in the opinions or intentions of the Body which planned and proposed the Constitution, but in the sense attached to it by the people in their respective State Conventions where it received all the authority which it possesses.

This continuing misdirection of inquiry should be seen as an indictment of the bourgeois sympathies and elitist biases of most scholars addressing this issue. The question that is rarely asked is, "How did the Americans awarding the document their approbation understand it?" Only *the understanding of the people* whose representatives ratified the Constitution and gave it life is critical in any appraisal of how well or poorly the Constitution is understood today. And in answering that question, the intent of the "founders" may have limited relevance that would, however, need to be demonstrated empirically. Only after closely examining state and *local* records might it be shown that the coastal elite's views were of (great or little) importance in shaping how the vast majority of Americans, isolated in their islands of near autonomy, might have understood the new national frame of government to which they gave legitimacy and standing. In effect, the term "founders" is an egregiously offensive and horrible misnomer.

But no matter how America's parochial and Christian people understood the construction of this secular and "liberal" national experiment, they certainly did not believe that its substantive values (or lack thereof) could, should, or would be applied to real units of corporate ethical and political life — the local communities and states. Hence, if we want to understand the role which the constitutional regime was *expected to and did play* in the political life of the average citizen for the next 75 years (that is, the understanding that was awarded approbation by the delegates to the ratifying conventions), we must examine the thought and values of the people of America, its conservative commons, and *not the intentions* of a small aberrant but elite minority whose values mesh so well with the contemporary American scholars who are their intellectual descendants.

It is instead the ethically intrusive, substantive vision of the good that defines Christian "republicanism" that we must turn to if we want to understand the ground upon which the Constitution, with its national regime of "liberal" nonvalues, was accepted *to better insure the continuity and maintenance of the rather homogeneous island of corporate ethical and political life*. This most assuredly was not the intention of those transitional liberal nationalists who promoted the Constitution — the national elite's intention must be considered largely irrelevant to our understanding of what the document that was ratified meant to the American people.

That "republicanism" was an ideology that guided a significant number of influential Americans during its revolutions has now become knowledge more or less (all too often still, less) acceptable to at least the best informed Americanists and theorists among political scientists. Our understanding of the essence of this social theory is derived from the documentary evidence gathered during the last 25 years by a loose coalition of revisionist historians as they went about mounting an eviscerating attack against Hertz's thesis of an innately liberal America. In the words of Appleby, who is the liberal apologist among them, "America was not born liberal, individualistic, or capitalistic." Certainly this must be accepted as a most refreshing gift of historical legitimation to those of us who still have not made our peace with an America that its intellectuals see exactly as what she wasn't — that is, liberal, individualistic, and purely capitalistic. The "discovery" of a historic America that preferred Christianity over secularism, sacrifice over self-indulgence, community over the individual, and the male over emasculated neuters should be no surprise to anyone familiar with the "folk" of America.

What I found so unacceptable (even if wholly predictable) among APSA panelists was to whom the newly rediscovered "republicanism" was awarded, or better said, to whom it was denied.

Each and every paper that touched on the broad range of themes associated with "republicanism" (and they were plentiful) failed to recognize that "republicanism" has been a continuously active element in the outlook of, until recently, an overwhelming majority of the American population. But these Americans, truly the "people," rural and often lower middle class, invariably Christian and hailing from the Midwest or South, could never be so recognized because they are seen (rightfully so) as the implacable enemy by the cosmopolitan secular intellectual. These men and women, who still attempt to maintain a moral community life in the small towns and backwaters of America, are the true but ignored heroes of the intelligentsia's renewed recognition of the role "republicanism" has played in American life.

Not only were the people who were still active participants in "republican" societies ignored as if they don't (and never did) exist, but there was also no public recognition among the "objective" scholars that it is conservatism that is the blood descendant and inheritor of the "republican" mantle among contemporary ideologies. Indeed, the representative chosen to be "discovered" as depositaries of this mind couldn't be more poorly selected by any set of objective standards. Nevertheless, they were well matched with the class outlook and values of the investigating scholars. The recipients of this honor, of course, were none other than the "Founding Fathers" — another *coastal* elite intelligentsia — who were (in very general terms) infatuated enlightenment rationalists, de-

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ists, and atheists, venal bourgeois materialists enormously overattentive to the rights of the individual, with almost no concern with the ethical goals only the community can effect or values other than those instrumental to the maintenance of a bourgeois regime. In almost all ways their values or lifestyles were antithetical to those expected to be found in authentic "republicans." But the most legitimate "republicans" then and now, the Christian commons of America, can never be recognized as such, for they represent and bring to life an order diametrically opposed to the effeminate secular elite now most amusingly self-perceived as promulgators of "republican" values and masculine virtues.

Consistent with the class bias found in the search for exemplars of "republicanism" in the American past and present was the papers' distortion of substantive content of both pagan "republicanism" and its Christian American variant. The expositors of the classic tradition invariably dredged up a neutered and sanitized version suitable for contemporary liberal consumption. Gone were the racist, elitist, unabashedly sexist, xenophobic, and jingoistic elements, along with classical republicanism's overriding concern with patriotism and ethical intrusiveness in what we call the private life of the citizen (the true republicans might very well find such a phrase solecistic). What remained was a pretty, dressed-up simulacrum which only showed an authentic concern with economic egoism and a confused approbation of some sort of group ethical existence—without, however, being oppressive to the individual, or exclusive in terms of groups to be accepted.

What this all too closely resembled was the oxymoronic class dream of Western intelligentsia, the "liberal democratic socialist utopia." Given the distasteful reality that Western intellectuals have had to confront with each of their successive socialist sweethearts (first the Soviet Union, then China, and then Yugoslavia, and finally Cuba), these peripatetic dreamers have finally found an appropriate environment in which to invest their sympathies—a past that they can remake in their own chosen image and where reality need not necessarily intrude on their fantasies.

I also found the treatment of "republicanism" among the papers to be distinctly deformed in yet one other additional way. What was ignored, consistent with the kind of bias Vitz has discovered in the textbooks written by a similar intellectual class, is that Americans, except for a handful of coastal elite, were not pagan "republicans" but Christians. In attempting to ground American "republicanism," most conveniently, in 14th-century Florence or among the articulate deist population of 18th-century America, those proponents of a renewal of American "republicanism" feel unencumbered by the American reality. The reality that American "democratic" intellectuals so studiously avoid is that communalism in America has almost invariably been Christian, and that even today articulate spokesmen who wish to speak to the majority of Americans of the necessity and centrality of corporate ethical visions to a fully human life must continue to do so in the language of a Christian moralist.

In sum, I must indict not just the organizers and paper givers at the various APSA panels this past summer, but given their likely representative nature, I must hold responsible the entire political science community for its blatant and ugly class, ideological, and religious biases. But maybe it is compassion that is called for, instead of vituperation, since we must remember that the average liberal political scientist is caught on the horns of a most unyielding dilemma.

The antinomy they confront, that might be worthy of empathy, is how to continue to write as if they were "democratic" (as their self-image demands) while insuring that the average Christian American with antithetical political and social values is either ignored or never accurately represented (as their self-interest insists). Their solution, as the papers and discussions that I witnessed indicate, is to bifurcate their minds. On the one hand they loudly proclaim their democratic sympathies, while on the other they continue to ignore the average historical and contemporary American or to fabricate a replacement whom they can uphold. Isn't it time that political scientists accepted Americans as they are, and finally invited them, at least in spirit, to the party that is annually given in their honor? Or is this a radical proposition much too dangerous to the class interests of political scientists?

Barry Alan Shain is Prize Teaching Fellow at Yale University.

Letter From the Heartland

by Jane Greer

And the Skies Are Not Cloudy All Day

Deborah Epstein Popper is a graduate student in geography at Rutgers University, and Frank J. Popper chairs the university's urban studies department there: in New Brunswick, New Jersey, about as far away from the Great Plains, in every way, as you can get.

The Poppers published a long article in the December 1987 issue of *Planning* (American Planning Association). The article was titled "The Great Plains: From Dust to Dust" and subtitled "a daring proposal for dealing with an inevitable disaster." Their thesis is that we are presently acting upon "the largest, longest-running agricultural and environmental miscalculation in American history." The "miscalculation"? That the Great Plains can grow crops and sustain cattle.

"Over the next generation[!] the Plains will . . . become almost totally depopulated," say the authors, at which point—or better yet, before which—the federal government should buy as much land as it can and return it to shortgrass. The Great Plains would be at its *best*, in fact, as a national grassland, and the sooner the better. The Poppers think that the national grasslands we have today, used mainly for low-intensity grazing and recreation, "rank among the most successful types of federal landholdings."

So what's the "Great Plains," anyway? Just the Dakotas and a little bit of Nebraska and Montana, which, if they're good enough for secret missile silos and radioactive garbage, are certainly good enough to revert to grass? Well, readers who live elsewhere

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should be advised that the Poppers define the Great Plains as a region whose "eastern border is the 98th meridian," which runs straight up through the hearts of Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas and the eastern thirds of Nebraska, South Dakota, and North Dakota. Denver, Colorado, on the 105th meridian, roughly marks the region's western edge, which means that that state, Montana, Wyoming, and New Mexico are included too, for a total of 10 states in all. "Although the Plains occupy one fifth of the nation's land area, the region's overall population, approximately 5.5 million, is less than that of Georgia or Indiana," write the Poppers meaningfully.

Although they never really come right out and *say* so, it's obvious that by "overall" population the Poppers mean the Oshkosh, b'gosh kind: farmers and ranchers. They claim that the soil and the ecology in the Plains states are just too fragile to support the demands made on them nowadays by farming, ranching, and oil, coal, and mineral extraction. They talk about "sodbusters" (whom *I'd* grown up admiring as settlers who *tamed* the stubborn sod) as greedy or ignorant men who *over*grazed and *over*plowed the soil, ruining it and leaving a legacy and habits of ruin for those who came later. ("Grass no good upside down," they solemnly quote a 19th-century Pawnee chief saying as he watched homesteaders slice up virgin soil.)

It's not that the Poppers have any of their facts wrong; it's just that their conclusions don't seem to spring naturally from the facts. They're correct in saying that the Great Depression hit the Plains states years before the Wall Street event. They're also right in pointing out that small towns and farmers in the Great Plains went berserk during the energy boom and the fat agricultural years of the 1970's, overbuilding and overplanting, and that now those same towns and farmers are suffering for their shortsightedness. The gargantuan Ogallala Aquifer, providing water for agriculture in six of the Plains states, is drying up from overuse. Soil erosion is a serious problem in many places. Farm foreclosure and bankruptcy are higher in the Plains states than anywhere else. Near-future droughts are predicted, and the "greenhouse effect" is expected to raise the temperatures everywhere by at least two or three degrees, which would make the Plains even more susceptible to drought.

But it's never been a secret that it's a lot harder to wrench a living from the land in Nebraska or the Dakotas than it is in Iowa or Missouri, where the rain chooses to dump itself and the topsoil seems a hundred miles thick. On the other hand, we're not living in poverty here. Our best grain-growers and livestock ranchers have learned how to wrest a pretty good living from this thin-skinned place without doing any damage. And because of them, our "bigger" cities (over, say, 30,000) are holding their own, population-wise, and every month sees new businesses taking the place of those that have folded. Our small towns are dying gracefully, inevitably. The Great Plains is *not* the Fertile Crescent, and small towns here simply aren't destined to last for more than 100, maybe 150, years.

Yet what the Poppers see as the dismal future here is based mainly on the predictable death of our small towns. And that's where I take heart, because *I* think the *Poppers* think our small towns are dead *already*, or might as well be. Their article was accompanied by some rather transparently patronizing photographs captioned, for example, "Picking up the mail at six below in Morton County, North Dakota"; "Saturday night at the Alamo Bar in North Platte, Nebraska"; "Burton and Kurtlye Brewster at lunch with the local postman at the Quarter Circle U Brewster Ranch near Birney, Montana"; and Darrel Coble of Cimarron County, Oklahoma, saying, "I don't really know why I like living here. I guess just 'cause this country's home." Makes me feel like I should ask for food stamps just for having to *live* in this hellhole.

The Poppers are not the first to come up with this idea, they remind us, citing several forerunners and promising that there will be plenty more. Bret Wallach, a University of Oklahoma geographer and MacArthur fellow, wants the Forest Service to pay willing Plains farmers and ranchers the *full value of what they think they might cultivate in the next 15 years*. The deal is, they *wouldn't* cultivate it—this takes set-asides into the 21st century!—but would follow an approved native shortgrass-planting program, after which the Forest Service would buy them out except for a 40-acre homestead. That sounds just tempting enough to be dangerous, except that farmers are farmers because they like the personal freedom to do what they want. Robert Scott of the Institute of the Rockies in Missoula, Montana, wants to turn a tenth of his state into a game preserve he would call the "Big Open." State and federal agencies, combining forces, would remove fences and domestic animals and replace them with game. According to the Poppers, Scott figures that a ranch of 10,000 acres—about four miles on a side, not at all unusual these days—could bring in $48,000 a year for the sale of hunting licenses, and the one-tenth slice of Montana would add a thousand new jobs to the area: there would apparently be a high demand for "outfitters, taxidermists, workers in gas stations, restaurants, motels." *Whoo-ee, Elmer, let's dump great-grampaw's homestead and the rest of the 28 sections and get us a job in a* GAS STATION. You bet.

Jane Greer's great-grandfather Klopfenstein busted sod in Iowa, and she and her husband drain the aquifer onto their shortgrass lawn in doomed Bismarck, North Dakota.

Letter From Albion

by Andrei Navrozov

Causley at 70

My formal association with *Chronicles* began in February 1986, when, at the suggestion of its editor, I wrote an obituary of Philip Larkin. Looking back at the history of my loves, I explained that I had decided to buy and edit *The Yale Literary Magazine* because "my ambition in life was to find the poet born to translate Rilke into English and publish him." At that time, my ambition remained unfulfilled, although its pursuit did lead me to the living wellsprings of English poetry, with Larkin, whom I had discovered in a secondhand bookshop near Amir's Falafel on Broadway, as my forked stick: "The trees are coming

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into leaf" (the book opened at random) "Like something almost being said."

A few issues back, incidentally, *Chronicles* fulfilled that ancient ambition of mine by publishing Rilke's "Autumn Day" translated by Alban Coventry. Apart from one or two forgotten translations by Ludwig Lewisohn in the 1940's, this is the only Rilke poem that will live happily ever after in the English language. From Lewisohn's "Angels" (as I remember it), for comparison:

> But let the wings be spread.
> The ages'
> Awakened wind comes
> blowing in:
> As though God with his
> umbrageous
> Broad sculptor's hands has
> turned the pages
> Of the dark book of Origin.

But the fulfillment of an old ambition passes unnoticed, as in a dream. Alban Coventry has given me an English "Autumn Day"; *Chronicles* has become in many ways what *The Yale Literary Magazine* was prevented from being; Philip Larkin is famous. What next?

Next is Charles Causley. Between 1979 and 1982, *The Yale Literary Magazine* published eight important new poems by Causley ("New Year's Eve, Athens"; "Sleeper in a Valley"; "Seven Houses"; "Singing Game"; "Returning South"; "Beechworth"; "In a Melbourne Suburb"; "On Launceston Castle"), when the only collection available to American readers was David Godine's *Charles Causley: Collected Poems 1951-1975* (Boston, 1975). Like Larkin, Causley was a revelation to me in 1975, and it was no coincidence that in the first issue of *The Yale Literary Magazine* (well, the first of Volume 148, actually) his poems followed Larkin's. In 1984, everything we had published was included in the British collection *Secret Destinations (New Poems)*, brought out by Macmillan. Finally, later this month, Godine is bringing out Causley's poems from the last decade under the title of that interim collection: *Secret Destinations (Poems 1977-1987)*. It is wonderful, in this issue's poetry section, to be able to give our readers a preview of this long-overdue volume.

I saw the poet in February, at the opening of "Causley at 70," an exhibition of paintings, sculpture, manuscripts, and books put on at the University of London to define the spiritual universe of this man. On a past birthday, Larkin addressed his Cornish friend in "A Birthday Card":

> Dear Charles, My Muse, asleep
> or dead,
> Offers this doggerel instead . . .
> Ah, Charles, be reassured!
> For you
> Make lasting friends with all
> you do,
> And all you write; your truth
> and sense
> We count on as a sure defence
> Against the trendy and the mad,
> The feeble and the downright
> bad.
> I hope you have a splendid day,
> Acclaimed by wheeling gulls
> at play
> And barking seals, sea-lithe
> and lazy
> (My view of Cornwall's
> rather hazy)
> And humans who don't think
> it sinful
> To mark your birthday with
> . a skinful.

It was in this spirit that the birthday exhibition opened, although throughout the evening the poet was drinking water.

Larkin and Causley: no two poets could be less alike. And yet in one respect they are similar: both are quiet publicly. This is impossible in America, where withdrawal into private life is synonymous with oblivion, but England still offers her poets nooks to crawl into and think in, sometimes among the "barking seals, sea-lithe and lazy"—who am I to improve on Larkin's vision of Cornwall? —though often far less picturesque. This is one reason why your poetry editor writes from misty Albion, and why so many of the poets to appear in these pages are British.

American influence—in the form of the worst that New York has to offer—is increasingly felt, however. The nooks are disappearing one by one, bulldozed by U.S. publishing conglomerates, asphalted under Madison Avenue banalities, and walked on by visiting Columbia professors. This, in turn, affects judgments of poetry, poets, people, and life.

A few years ago, Stephen Spender, the English poet New York loves best, was a guest at a dinner party given in his honor by a friend of mine, a marvelously gifted poet in his own right, who, for reasons no discerning reader of poetry needs to have explained in this day and age, has been published in two magazines in his whole life: *The Yale Literary Magazine* and *Chronicles*. Apart from having written two or three dozen poems that will live long after the magazines which published them have been forgotten (compared to Spender's two or three, in my view), this friend of mine has something of a reputation as The Last Gentleman in New York. He wanted to show his work to the celebrated Spender, but did not want to take advantage of a guest. In the end, after a few days' soul-searching, he dropped off a sheaf of poems at the hotel where the celebrated personage was staying. To make a long story short, he has not heard from him since.

I was introduced to Spender at the Causley exhibition and reminded him that he had never even thanked my friend for dinner. "He is the man with that big apartment on Park Avenue?" said the celebrated personage uncertainly, adding as a kind of interrogative afterthought: "And he writes a lot of poems?" My friend's name is Rudolph Schirmer, and the mind of one deserving the title of poet should have generated more interesting associations. In 1937, Charles Causley's first work, a play called *The Conquering Hero*, was published in America by Schirmer's.

But I have digressed. Welcome to *Chronicles*, Charles Causley.

Andrei Navrozov is poetry editor for Chronicles.

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Letter From 'The Major's'

by James E. Treher

For God, Country, and Kate Smith

To that select few who have frequented its precincts, it is simply "The Major's." In reality it's the "Globe and Laurel," along Virginia's Route One near the main gate to the U.S. Marine Corps Base, Quantico, Virginia. Its proprietor is a sandy haired, crewcut, toothbrush-mustached, immaculately turned out, retired Major of the U.S. Marine Corps: one Rick Spooner. A lionhearted World War II Veteran, who as a lad of 16 survived such horrors as Tarawa (over a thousand dead on the beach in the first 48 hours), the Major also recalls with quiet satisfaction his camaraderie-in-arms with the Royal British Marine Commando; hence the appellation "Globe and Laurel," insignia of those stout Brits who were the precursors of our very own Leathernecks. The tolerantly stern majordomo of a very proper hostelry of almost 19th-century milieu ("A Touch of Tradition," as its Inn sign proclaims) is a Kiplingesque curator of a veritable hall of memorabilia of the U.S. Marine Corps, the British Commandos, and the FBI, whose Academy for the past almost 50 years has been located on the base.

Decorum fitting a watering hole for gentlemen, soldiers, and others is *de rigueur* at the Major's, who has only to fix a cold eye on a temporary miscreant to restore propriety. Every inch of the walls (and the ceiling) of the Globe and Laurel is covered with the memories of war, battle flags, regimental honors, photographs of Field Grade Officers and heroes of lesser ranks, of poignant mementos of battles old and recent — and a couple generations of Marines and FBI Agents hold the Globe and Laurel in the same esteem in which the Foreign Legion held Sidi-bel-Abbes. In keeping with the set and the setting, the menu is restricted to prime rib and veal cordon bleu and blood-red steak broiled black. The pouring whiskeys are Jack Daniels and Johnny Walker Red, and the unfortunate ordering anything less than Beefeaters is held in slight suspicion of failure to meet the Globe's required standards. But for all its refinements, this is not the habitat of the effete. The Marines, even in mufti, have the mien of men who have been through the crucible of war, and in uniform wear ribbons of most of the conflicts of our century, and the FBI Agents are veterans of those alley wars which are equally demanding, but for which ribbons are not issued. Good company in which to be, in the extremities just discussed, or when the glow is high — the imported beer flowing and the steaks charring, the Major at his *pater familias* best, and the sea stories at high tide — and a powerfully good place to be when that company and mood prevails.

All of which fond reflections were evoked with the recent news of the death of Kate Smith. Strange convergence, to be sure, but herein lies the nexus of a singer, a song, and the vagaries of a rather whimsical Inn.

A few years ago, during a best forgotten era in which demonstrative patriotism — among a host of other long honored virtues — was looked upon as rather an embarrassment to the sophisticate, a quartet of interested businessmen, some stock brokers, and a network TV executive toured the FBI Academy with one of the Globe and Laurel's initiates. The entourage gravitated, eventually, to the Globe and Laurel for repast and refreshments. The company evolved, as it so often does at the Major's, to what a

poet once referred to as a "goodly crowd," of the usual genre — Marines, FBI Agents, visiting professional soldiers of various foreign military missions, and a sprinkling of law enforcement officers attending training sessions at the Academy. As counterpoint to the rough but fraternal badinage of hard guys from tough professions were heard the melodies of old, seemingly incongruous to this clientele — "I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen" and "Moonlight Serenade" played by a unique pianist, Ray Baker, ordained Minister of the Gospel and marvelous entertainer — and the occasional recorded rendition of "Amazing Grace" by a bagpipe ensemble.

Sometime along that evening of yore, the music, erstwhile largely ignored, drifted into the strains of "God Bless America." Uncontrived and spontaneously, that goodly crowd was on its feet in unforgettable concert, pewter mugs lifted to the ceiling, and not a few wet eyes among men who knew the essence of that anthem — men who knew the blood and tears that sired that song. A visiting Brit, somewhat bemused, gently observed, "Not abashed at all, are you, you Yanks, about loving your country?"

I guess not. I hope we never are. Memory warms, things past beguile — but I wish there were more Major Spooners, more Globe and Laurels, and more Kate Smiths — and that we as a nation will forever sing and pray, "God Bless America."

James E. Treher is an ex-Marine and a retired FBI Agent of 25 years service and was recently director of the Allegheny County Police Training Academy, Pittsburgh, PA.

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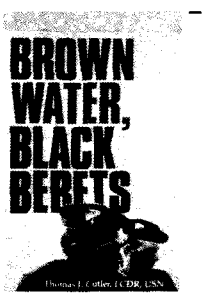

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STAGE

Michael Crawford as the Phantom and Sarah Brightman as Christine in Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest theatrical extravaganza, The Phantom of the Opera.

The Great Deception

by David Kaufman

It's only too easy to be cynical about Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Phantom of the Opera*, and particularly about the excess and emptiness it stands for. While lavish money and attention have been spent on all aspects of this $8.5 million production — in ways that are guaranteed to impress the child in every adult — its packagers forgot the one ingredient that some theatergoers still require: the story. For all the dressing, *Phantom*'s story is so vague that even Cameron Mackintosh, the producer, Harold Prince, the director, or Lloyd Webber himself would be hard pressed to locate it. In his posthumously published *The Musical Theater*, Alan Jay Lerner tells an anecdote about Lloyd Webber's earlier blockbuster *Evita*: "As a clue to Webber's fundamental concept, he said to me one day that what interested him when he wrote was less the plot and more a visually exciting effect."

Lloyd Webber's success, according to the conventional wisdom, represents British appropriation of the American musical. But has anyone noticed just how simple his formula has been? While there might be some creative and financial risk in adapting Shaw's *Pygmalion* (*My Fair Lady*), or Wilder's *The Matchmaker* (*Hello Dolly*), or for that matter coming up with an original idea, Lloyd Webber hedged his bets right from the start. His first two offerings, *Joseph and His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*, were both based on a best-seller — the Bible. Since then, he has pursued and captured an even larger audience by manufacturing musicals for which language is no barrier. For *Cats* or *Starlight Express* the experience of seeing them is enough — their content is utterly meaningless.

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Even to call them musicals is insulting to the genre they claim to be part of.

Following the box-office success of *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Evita*—his two breakthrough musicals of the 70's—Lloyd Webber's penetration of Broadway has accelerated, spearheading infiltration by other British musical *products*. Lloyd Webber's *Cats* (1981) and *Song and Dance* (1982) seemed to pave the way for *Me and My Girl*, a revival of a 30's British musical. The 1987 Broadway opening of his *Starlight Express* (1984) practically coincided with *Les Miserables*, also produced by Lloyd Webber's regular producer, Mackintosh. And now his *Phantom* preceded the British *Chess* (in which Lloyd Webber's ex-lyricist Tim Rice had a major hand) as well as *Carrie*.

As British theater critic Sheridan Morley puts it, "What also mattered about *Evita* was that, for the first time, an English musical had been marketed as if it were American: film rights were sold for a million dollars (though the film itself has yet to be made), Broadway and worldwide tours were soon negotiated, and there was no way of doubting, as Elaine Paige stood on that stage balcony singing 'Don't Cry for Me Argentina,' that the West End musical had at last woken up and grown up. This, after 50 years of dodging the issue, was to be the bid for the big international blockbuster, and it worked: the night of a thousand nights became just that, and more."

The real mystery in Andrew Lloyd Webber's production of Phantom *seems to be, what happened to the plot?*

But in the struggle between American and British musical output, the declared war is complicated by the terms of the skirmishes. The Lloyd Webber contingencies have shrewdly discovered a way to make their offerings critic-proof. The logic goes something like this: open in London first and carefully manipulate the hype to build an advance sale in New York—rendering the opinion of the *Times* superfluous in the process.

Though *Jesus Christ Superstar* opened in New York in the fall of 1971, 10 months before it landed in London, it thrived on the record sales that heralded its appearance. More to the point, every subsequent Lloyd Webber offering had its premiere in London roughly a year before New York. In the meantime, Clive Barnes, who was then the *Times* critic, called the score of *Jesus Christ Superstar* "cheap, like the Christmas decorations of a chic Fifth Avenue store"—even Morley claimed that *Jesus Christ* was "designed to reassure the middle aged without actively alienating the young." In response to *Evita* in 1979, Walter Kerr wrote, "Though the Rice-Webber score sometimes sounds as though Max Steiner had arranged it for Carmen Miranda, there are waltzes and polkas and threatening marches to keep us alert." Today, Frank Rich has found *Phantom* "a characteristic Lloyd Webber project—long on pop professionalism and melody, impoverished of artistic personality and passion . . . as much a victory of dynamic stagecraft over musical kitsch as it is a triumph of merchandising *über alles*." During this same period, any new American entry is denied the privilege of disregarding a *Times* review and its producers are quickly compelled to post a closing notice if "the *Times* didn't like it" is uttered offstage.

But should Lloyd Webber be blamed alone when the audiences have been so receptive? He has come, and he has seen, but he has conquered only because the barbarians have been ready victims. If, as Mimi Kramer suggests in her review of *Phantom* for *The New Yorker*, a Lloyd Webber

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musical "seeks to impress an audience with financial rather than creative powers," and "achievement . . . lies . . . in the idea of extravagance itself," what could be a more fitting epitaph for our era?

The excess of *Phantom* begins and ends with its staging. Like Lloyd Webber's last few arrivals, it is a vulgar circus — the latest reminder of what money and marketing can purchase as success. In addition to being told before, its story gets swallowed up by the technical wizardry — the theatrical ingenuity behind *Phantom* is so dazzling that no hyperbole can do it justice.

And herein lies *Phantom*'s ambivalence. As it accomplishes its calculations, the staging proves enough to justify all the excitement — even the most discerning spectators must marvel at this unique presentation of what can now be realized in the theater. The mock opera sequences within the musical have uncannily recaptured the spirit of what appears to be the look and the tone of 19th-century opera. In its sweeping majesty, the "Masquerade" number that opens Act II seems to invoke Ziegfeld for an audience that can never know what that bygone epoch was really like.

Phantom opens with an auction of the contents of the Paris Opera House (the Majestic Theater itself), which will momentarily be transformed back into its heyday. Five massive layers of velvet and brocaded drapes rearrange themselves, opera boxes swing into position from the wings, the dilapidated chandelier recovers its glimmer as it miraculously rises up from the stage and ascends into place over the first dozen rows of the Majestic auditorium to recreate the Paris Opera House in all of its *beaux arts* splendor. The fabulous flashback mode, designed by Maria Bjornson, is heralded by a sudden burst of Lloyd Webber's most garish organ chords, triggered in turn by the auctioneer's comment, "Some of you may recall the Phantom of the opera — a mystery never explained." Unfortunately, two and a half hours later, the mystery still remains.

The phantom of the title in the end somewhat inexplicably relinquishes his hold on his beloved Christine — the beauty to his beast (at least she's supposed to be a beauty, even though Frank Rich created quite a scandal in London papers by commenting that Sarah Brightman — Webber's wife, who portrays Christine — resembles nothing so much as a "chipmunk"). Earlier in the "plot," Christine was a mere chorus girl before the Phantom terrorized the opera management into featuring her as the lead soprano performing his own composition. Once Christine is released from the Phantom's spell, she is free to walk off into the Paris moonlight with her other suitor, Raoul, a childhood playmate. But these characters, as well as the supporting cast which peoples the stage rather than inhabits the story, are all caricatures at best (although Michael Crawford as the Phantom and Judy Kaye as the displaced opera soprano both deliver worthwhile performances). By the end, it takes all we have got to follow the narrative, let alone give it any credence. The Phantom's ultimate disappearance, leaving only his mask behind on his throne, is more enigmatic and pretentiously symbolic than fulfilling. Without even recovering from all the flashbacks, *Phantom* closes abruptly, perhaps suggesting a *Phantom Two* (to surpass the $17,500,000 worth of tickets sold before this extravaganza even opened).

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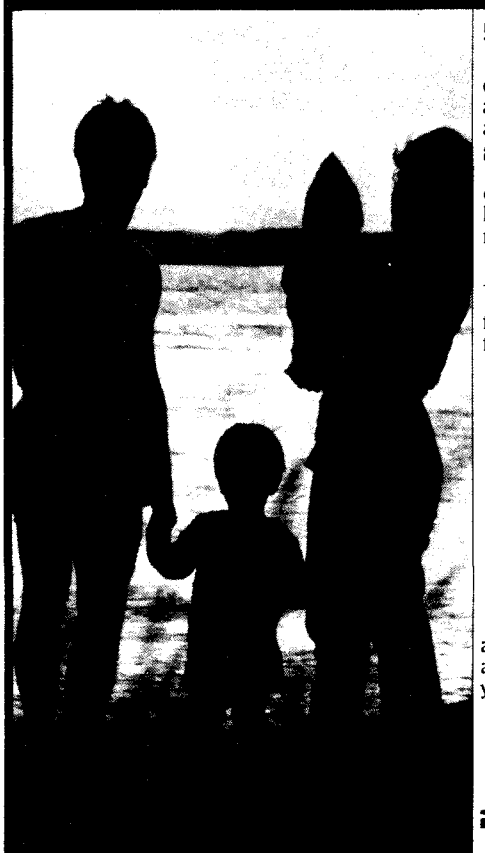

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For those who still feel that a theatergoing experience should be about something, it's difficult to avoid resenting the situation. The masterfully executed design of the show appears calculated to divert attention from what should be the *raison d'être* of any musical: its score, its lyrics, and its book. If those fortes were all that this *Phantom* had going for it, it would be fortunate to run for a week.

Lloyd Webber's score boasts only two pleasing melodies, which are repeated often enough to make the cumulative effect seem more substantial than it really is. Instead of a coherent story, sets literally evaporate or melt into new ones, and perspectives instantly change so that during a mock opera performance, the front of the stage becomes backstage. The real basis for the success of *Phantom*, in other words, is not M. Gaston Leroux's original French novel, but any number of preceding musicals Webber & Company exploited. (*Dreamgirls* introduced the method for altering perspectives on stage, while *Smile* took this effect even further. The bridges that shift into place in *Starlight Express* have been used here for the Phantom to take Christine down to his lair, or for Christine and Raoul to climb to the roof of the Opera House. Even the cavernous lake that leads to the Phantom's quarters is not unlike the Paris sewers from *Les Miserables*, a far superior musical in almost every respect.)

Lloyd Webber's hideously spectacular version of *Phantom* has prompted discussions of other variations on the French novel. But the one which seems most pertinent for evaluating Lloyd Webber's version has curiously been overlooked: the 1974 Brian de Palma film *Phantom of the Paradise*, with an original score by Paul Williams. Though Williams took greater liberties than Lloyd Webber in departing from the original story, his lyrics were vastly superior at capturing the book's essential sentiments. "And as I lost control / I swore I'd sell my soul for one love / Who would sing my song / Fill this emptiness inside me," goes one of the Phantom's laments *à la* Williams. "To work it out, I let them in / All the good guys and the bad guys that I've been. / All the devils that disturbed me / And the angels that defeated them somehow / Come together in me now," goes another. Compare these to the Phantom's titlesong (a duet with Christine) in the Lloyd Webber rendition: "And though you turn from me / To glance behind / The Phantom of the Opera / is there—inside your mind . . . / My spirit / My voice / In one combined: the Phantom of the Opera / Is there—inside your mind."

However we might feel today about the dated vernacular, Williams clearly displayed more responsibility to the story he adapted. In comparison, Lloyd Webber was more obviously motivated by the music-video spin-off and the disco-resale of the potential hit single he had fabricated, where words and meanings are about as relevant as bright lights at a discotheque.

The real story to this state-of-the-art technical prowess is the American Actors Equity's attempt to prevent Sarah Brightman, Lloyd Webber's wife, from repeating her starring role on Broadway. The Phantom, remember, would stop at nothing—not even murder—to ensure that the Paris Opera feature Christine. Lloyd Webber withheld and even threatened to cancel the American production of his musical until Actors Equity relented and permitted Brightman to perform this side of the Atlantic. Oscar Wilde's suggestion that truth imitates art has become something of a commonplace in our increasingly surreal age; if only Lloyd Webber had managed to translate some passion from his real-life Phantom role into the *product* of his best marketing feat yet.

David Kaufman writes from New York City.

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On 'My Country 60's'

Noticeably naive, I loved the innocuous excitement of the 60's pseudoextravaganza. After reading Jigs Gardner's "My Country 60's" (*Chronicles*, February 1988), my reformed self cries, "Hear! Hear!" but my memories make me "roll out the carpet one more time" to mimic, "Like, wow, Man!"

—*Gary Severson*
Everson, WA

As one who lived in the same Maine town with Scott Nearing for 15 years, I can assure your readers that Jigs Gardner's characterization of Nearing as a "Country Fake" is untruthful. Scott and Helen did grow most of their own food for their vegetarian diet and had enough extra to give generously to others. Although Scott kept working when people visited, he was always willing to answer questions meticulously. He might have seemed aloof at times, but he was definitely not "an insufferable, sanctimonious prig and charlatan." It is scandalous that Gardner ascribes his own feelings, apparently gained secondhand and politically motivated, to many others. I note that Gardner now lives in Nova Scotia, where, fortunately, I have not met him. Was he run out of Vermont on a rail?

—*Martin R. Haase*
Chester, Nova Scotia

On 'Revenge of the Nerd'

Goetz was like a man traveling in an area of ill-repute, fully aware of the dangers. The color of his potential attackers is immaterial. So are the laws concerning the carrying of weapons. Goetz had no other protection than his own will and determination and a run-of-the-mill revolver. This accounts for the outpouring of sympathy and approval, although nobody wants a population of potential gunmen.

—*Phil F. Clarke*
Pleasant Hill, CA

Arthur Eckstein is mistaken to think that Bernhard Goetz could have scared the punks off merely by displaying his gun, that by emptying his gun he used excessive force, or that Goetz had lost control of himself to a greater degree than a cop might have.

Jimmy Hoffa said, roughly, "Run at a pistol, run away from a knife." If you point a pistol at a criminal who is within arm's reach, he can slap it aside before you can react. Once a weapon is brought into play, you are in mortal combat and dare not allow a criminal to think he has any choices other than retreat or death.

Has Eckstein any idea how many bullets are fired per enemy killed in battle? I assure him, four thugs down with only five shots fired is not reckless shooting. Even if each criminal only required one bullet, Goetz would have had only one bullet left. Had he emptied a 15-round clip, you might say he's lost control. But as it is, he seems to have displayed good fire discipline.

Lastly, speaking as someone who has twice confronted violent criminals, I say Goetz is a hero, as much as any wearer of the Silver Star. He didn't ask to be a hero; he just did his job when the dirty work had to be done.

—*Stephen Zeider*
Pasadena, CA

On a 'Letter From California'

There is a lot of support for the pro-Sandinista religious groups in Nicaragua among the main-line churches of Oregon. So much support that one wonders: Is it possible for any member to stand up in his church and express the Christian view? To find out, I decided to hold a series of seminars at the Methodist Church, the seminar material to be built around the agony that the majority of Nicaraguan Christians suffer at the hands of the junta. I was careful to choose a seminar title that was noninflammatory.

The first meeting of the series had just got nicely underway, when suddenly there burst into the room four of Ortega's most passionate supporters among our local Methodists. Their manner was very rude and intended obviously to be offensive. They pushed and shoved roughly through those already seated. They shouted unpleasant personal remarks at me. For quite a long while they refused to sit down but forced their way around the room, closely examining my lecture notes and inspecting, like Hitler's bookburners, the reference texts I had displayed on the table. Anything, even of the simplest nature, that I said was challenged—rather childishly, I thought. Each of the inquisitors carried a small writing pad, on which was put down anything that was deemed by the writer to be subversive. From beginning to end, the objective was intimidation. Little useful was accomplished at that session!

I felt as if I was being subjected to the ministrations of some totalitarian thought police; or, perhaps, Tomas Borge's *turbas*.

Later, I was asked why I had not been more aggressive, and "kicked those people out." Oh no! To have them displayed for a whole hour, in a way that no one would ever forget, the violence of the liberation theologist and the intolerance of the true Sandinista believer! Think of it! So I just sat there through it all, thinking of the encounter of Gary Burleson with similar people, as reported in *Chronicles* (August 1987). I, too, like Gary, had succeeded without really trying!

—*Alfred G. Ratz*
Bend, OR

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